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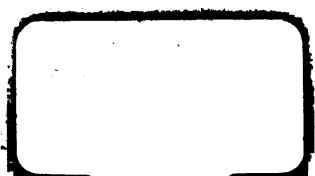
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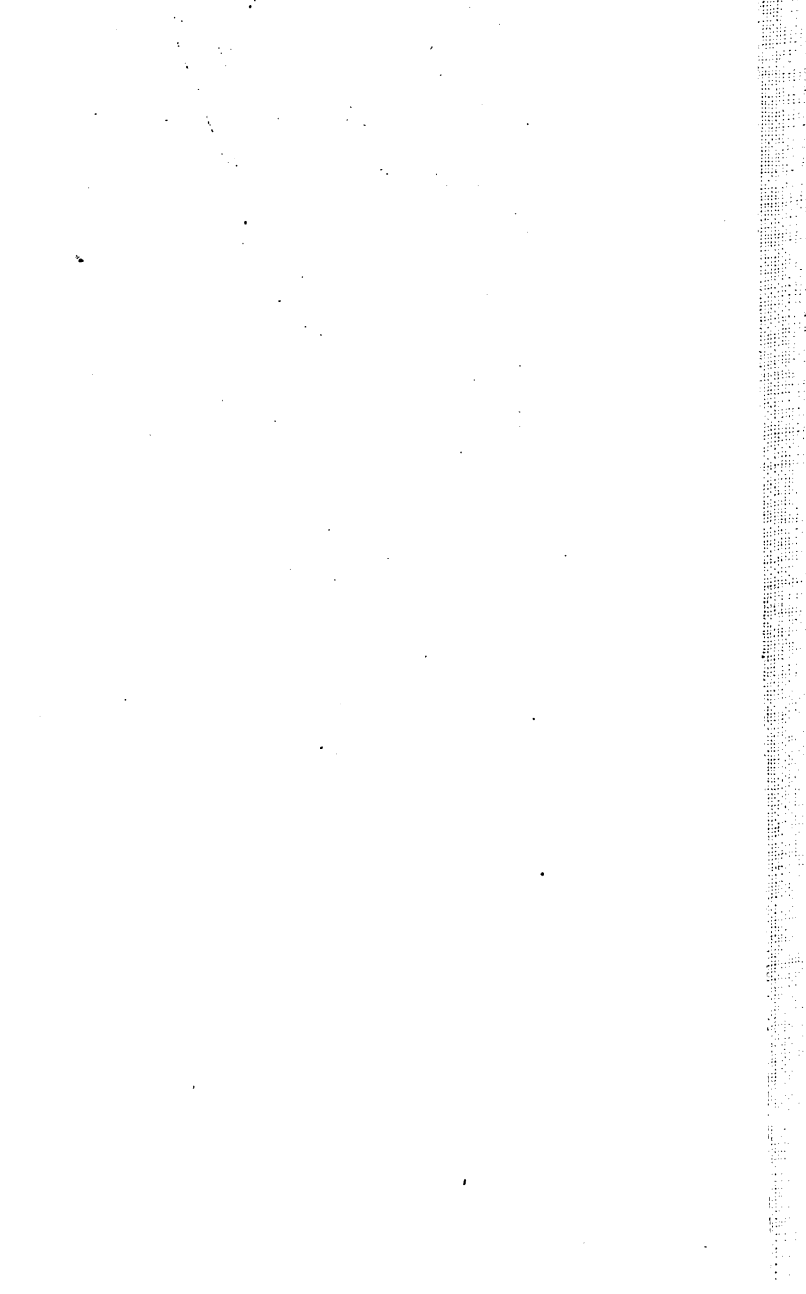
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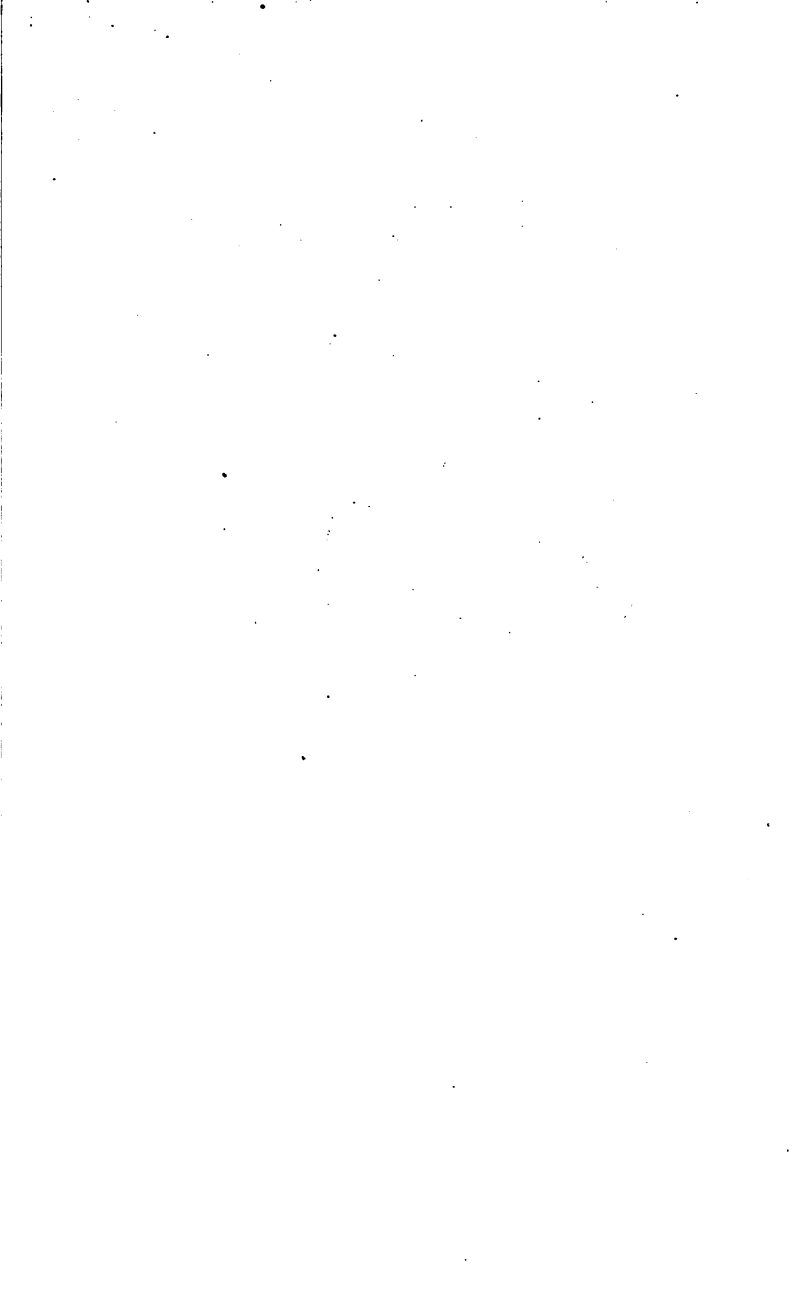


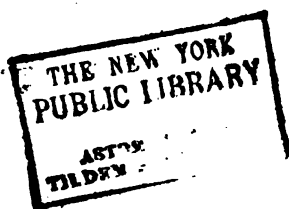






THE STORY OF HARECOURT.







Yours very truly
Alexander Graham Bell

THE STORY OF HARECOURT

Being the History of an Independent Church

By JOHN B. MARSH

AUTHOR OF "THE REFERENCE SHAKSPERE," "WISE SAYINGS OF THE GREAT
AND GOOD," "ROBIN HOOD AND HIS MERRY COMPANIONS"

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By THE REV. ALEXANDER RALEIGH, D.D.

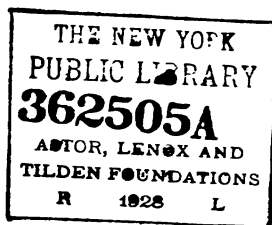


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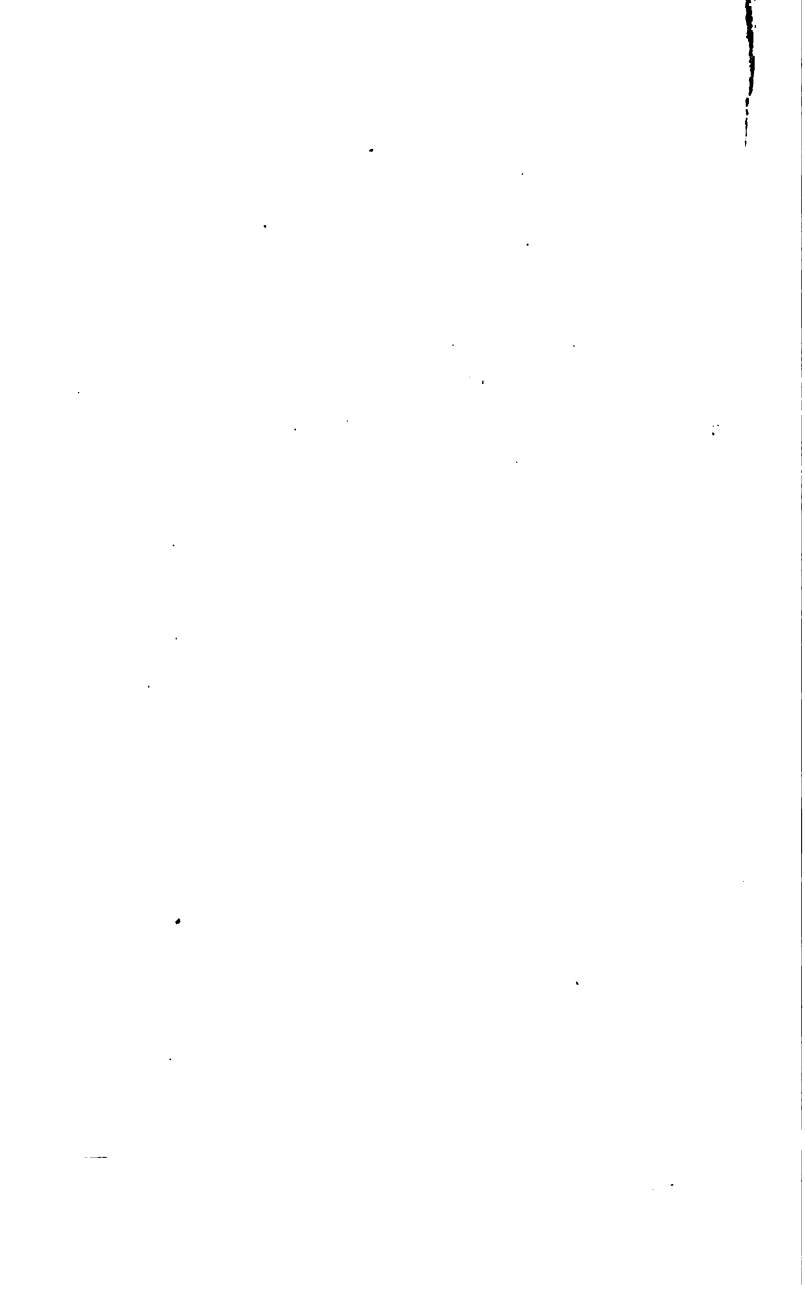
DEACONS

AND THE
MEMBERS OF HARECOURT INDEPENDENT CHURCH

This Story

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

“THE Story of Harecourt” is the history of an Independent Church, formed in 1648, by the Rev. George Cokayn, B.A. Hitherto very little has been known of him and those associated with him ; and, whatever claim to originality this story may possess, the credit is due more to the facilities now offered for research, than to any special skill on my part. To those gentlemen who have lightened my labour I desire to tender my most sincere thanks ; for without their help it would have been impossible to have gathered so many new facts concerning those of whom I write. To Sir Albert Woods, Garter King at Arms, for

the inspection of valuable MSS. under his care, and for other assistance, I am deeply indebted. The Authorities at the State Paper Office aided my research in every way; and Mrs. Green kindly allowed me to examine a mass of private notes, relating to State Papers during several years not yet calendared. At the Tower Colonel Milman supplied me with several material points relating to Lord Mayor Tichborne, never before now made public. Readers at the British Museum are always ready to acknowledge with profound gratitude the inestimable privileges which they there enjoy; and I have to express my deep appreciation of the help rendered me in more than one department. To the Rev. S. W. Kershaw, M.A., librarian at Lambeth Palace, I owe a hearty acknowledgment for his courtesy, on the occasion of a visit to examine some valuable MSS.; and I am also under great obligations to Mr.

W. H. Overall, F.S.A., librarian at the Guildhall, for the facility afforded me in referring to many curious records under his charge. Nor can I omit mentioning the excellent library under the care of Mr. Charles Richards, at the Bank of England, from which I obtained the loan of several valuable books. Dr. Williams's library, under the care of Mr. Hunter, is too well known to Nonconformists to require any commendation, but the courtesy of the librarian demands ample acknowledgment. It has been a source of much pleasure to me, in the course of my work, to know that the descendants of the great Sir Bulstrode were much interested in my work; and that in one particular, I have added a new fact to those presented to the world, in the biography published by Mr. R. H. Whitelock.

One of the most important results to which my work led, was the discovery of an old

church register, dated 1696, by Mr. James Spicer, the only surviving trustee of those, by whose foresight the congregation was removed from Hare Court to Canonbury. This book throws a fresh light upon the circumstances attending the death of John Bunyan. The good man at whose house he died, Mr. John Strudwick, was a deacon at the Rev. George Cokayn's church: a man of considerable means, and member of one of the City companies.

To the Rev. T. W. Davids, of Colchester, Mr. Thomas Whiteing, Sen., and many private friends, I am indebted for valuable hints; and to my wife for a large measure of assistance.

JOHN B. MARSH.

London.

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INTRODUCTION.

I AM asked, as I suppose is but natural, to write a few words of introduction to this early history of the Church of which I have now been many years the minister. I do so with much cordiality. Soon after I undertook the pastoral charge of Harecourt in Canonbury, I became aware that the annals of the Church were in some respects of unusual interest, and my ancestry in the ministerial office of great worth, and, in individual instances, of some fame. In consequence, I have often had a vague desire, and sometimes a half-formed purpose, to make fuller search among the roots and beginnings of our religious history. I am

now thankful that I never found the leisure to do this, since the task has fallen into abler hands. I am sure I have not the skill, and that I could not have commanded the patience, which have been displayed so signally by my friend Mr. Marsh in his researches. He has spared no pains; and he has had the good fortune to discover many things, which are of more than local significance. The story he has drawn up, while of course possessing special interest to the Congregation whose origin and early history it records, contains many little pictures of the social and religious life of our fathers which would not be inappropriate in works of greater pretension; which, in fact, serve in some modest measure to illustrate the history of our country during a very critical and formative time.

Harecourt is the historic title of a Congregation of Independents in Canonbury.

The name is derived from a court in the City between Aldersgate Street and Redcross Street: a locality famous in the early history of Nonconformity from the number of Dissenting places of worship which were erected there. An Independent Chapel was erected in Harecourt in 1692 by the Rev. John Nesbitt. The Congregation was at that time mourning the loss of their founder, the Rev. George Cokayn, B.A., Minister of Pancras, Soper Lane, in 1648. He was ejected from his living in 1660, and his Congregation going out with him, formed an Independent Community in Redcross Street. Thence, after the death of George Cokayn, they removed to a building in Hare Court, called the "Stated Room," which was succeeded by a more commodious building in 1772. In this subsequent congregations worshipped until 1857. At that time many external circumstances con-

curred in diminishing the extent and importance of the Congregation. The houses of City merchants which abounded in that neighbourhood had been supplanted by warehouses and cottage property; all the approaches to the Chapel were closed in by narrow alleys; and the property became greatly deteriorated. At this time application was made by the surviving trustees, Messrs. Spicer, Mollett, and Dixon, to Vice-Chancellor Sir Page Wood, for authority to dispose of the property in the City, and reinvest the proceeds, in accordance with the trust, in some more eligible neighbourhood. The requisite authority was obtained. Some time elapsed; and then the trustees entered into negotiations with "The London Congregational Chapel Building Society," for the purchase of a building then in course of erection in St. Paul's Road, Canonbury. In due time the building was made over to

them on generous and favourable terms by the Committee of that Society. The Church was removed from the narrow alleys of Hare Court to the more picturesque locality of Canonbury in 1857. At the first celebration of the Communion thirty-four members of the Church assembled. In 1870 there were—including communicants at the branch Churches which have sprung from us—997 members. The sum collected for all objects in connection with the Church in 1859—60 was £2,600. In 1870 it was upwards of £8,000. There are now four branch Churches in different parts of London; supported, in part, by the parent Church. We have much work on hand, of various kinds; and although there can be no future to us at all resembling the earliest days of our history, when men of rank and title, soldiers, and statesmen (and probably, on rare occasions, even the chief personage in the State), came into our assembly as

worshippers and communicants, we are more than content with the future we *may* have if we are diligent and faithful. It is nobler in a Church to work for the people than to entertain the great. Much work—which only Christian Churches can effectually do, remains to be done, and is most urgently needed. We rejoice in the activity and usefulness of all around us who serve the same gracious Lord, and who carry his message and gift of life to dying men. We are provoked by them, and we seek to provoke them in turn, to love and good works. Grace be with all them that love our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in sincerity.

May this little history, so artlessly and pleasantly presented by my friend, have kindly acceptance and charitable interpretation by all who read it.

ALEXANDER RALEIGH.

CHAPTER I.

George Cokayn — Calamy's Reference to him — His Birth—
Studies at Cambridge—First Appearance in London—His
Preface to Dr. Crispe's Sermons—The Free Grace Contro-
versy — Appointment to Pancras, Soper Lane — Stow's
Description of the Church—The Monuments—Bequests—
Principal Members of the Congregation—Principles they
professed—Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke—Sketch of his Life—
Story of Cromwell and Henry Ireton—Whitelocke opposes
Cromwell—Alderman Robert Tichborne—A famous Prayer
Meeting—Colonel Rowland Wilson—His Wealth—Town
Residence—Mary Wilson—John Ireton—Samuel Wilson—
John Moore—Mode of Public Worship.

THE earliest notice* of George Cokayn mentions that, after his ejection, many eminent men adhered to him; and the names of four are given—Alderman Tichborne, Ireton, Wilson, and Sir John Moore. Reference is also made to two sermons which he

* Dr. Calamy.

preached, and the preface to a third which he wrote.

Beyond these facts, nothing whatever was known of him. Yet the slight clue thus furnished led to the discovery of those facts which are now announced for the first time. Of the parentage, birth, and college life of George Cokayn, there will never be much known. Subsequent events in his life identify him with a babe who received the christian name of George in the parish church of Cople, Bedfordshire, on the 16th January, 1619. This was the son of John and Elizabeth Cokayn. In 1639 one George Cokayn took the degree of B.A. at Cambridge. He was then twenty years of age, and had been educated at Sidney Sussex College. He never made use of his degree, but the fact that he assisted in compiling a Greek lexicon proves that he was possessed of considerable learning. In 1646 he made his first appearance in

London, in the character of a theologian. The works of Dr. Tobias Crispe, an eminent Calvinist, were published, and Cokayn wrote the preface to one of the volumes. This is the happiest specimen of his composition now in existence. The fundamental principles of his theology were Free Grace for Sinners, and Christ the first gift to the Believer. This latter doctrine is the subject of the preface, and is set forth in eloquent and persuasive terms. Arminius was then living; and in the theological world the controversy about these doctrines ran high. Dr. Crispe's name furnished a new title for the theologians, who christened the believers in Free Grace "Crispians." Two years after he composed this preface, George Cokayn wrote himself "Minister of Pancras, Soper Lane." The precise date of his appointment is not known. In the journals of the House of Commons for 1643, there is a record of

the appointment of Christopher Goad to the living, and Walker states that he was soon afterwards ejected by Parliament. Cokayn's fame as a theologian was established by his preface to Crispe's sermons. He became chaplain to Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke, M.P., and was then appointed to the vacant living of Pancras, where he found only a small congregation.

This was the most famous City church during the Commonwealth and Protectorate. Three members of the congregation became sheriffs of London, and two of them filled the important office of lord mayor. The church stood on the north side of Pancras Lane ; and the chief entrance was from Soper Lane, now Queen Street, Cheapside. Stow says "the church was small, but had divers rich parishioners belonging to it, and many of them liberal benefactors." It was repaired and beautified in 1621, towards the cost of

which Alderman Sir Thomas Bennet, Dame Anne Soame, and Mr. Thomas Chapman gave liberally. There was a handsome porch; and the edifice was surmounted with a steeple. The church was erected in the twelfth century, and many important personages were buried within its vaults. Amongst them were several lord mayors of London. John Barnes, mayor in 1370, was the earliest of those whose names have been preserved. John Hadley was mayor in 1379; John Stockton in 1470; and Richard Gardner in 1478. Some of these were contemporaneous with Sir Richard Whittington and Sir William Waller. There were many others whose names cannot be associated now with events of public importance, but who occupied important positions four or five hundred years ago. Fragments of monuments erected to the memory of these men existed in the time of Cokayn; but they very much resembled

those which may now be seen in the vaults of St. Paul's Cathedral. The faces had lost all their comeliness, and the bodies lacked their full complement of limbs. There was one monument to the memory of Queen Elizabeth, for which the church was celebrated. This was presented by a member of the congregation in 1617. On a tablet was recorded the murder of one Robert Packenton, mercer, in 1536,* "who was killed with a gun as he was going to Mass from his house in Cheap." The murderer escaped. Several years afterwards, a thief condemned for a felony at Banbury, just before his execution confessed the murder. On a monument in the north wall of the choir was this inscription: "Hereunder lieth buried James Huysh, citizen and grocer, London, third son of John Huysh, of Beaufort, in the county of Somerset, Esq.; which James

* Stow's Survey.

had to his first wife Margaret Bouchier, by whom he had issue eleven children; and to his second wife Mary Moffet, by whom he had issue eighteen children. He died the 20th day of August, An. Dom. 1590." On boards in the porch were recorded the benefactions. Three small tenements in Whitecross Street were bequeathed on conditions that appear very curious now. A sermon was to be preached on the birthday of the benefactor, after which the minister and churchwardens dined together at a cost not exceeding £2. Provision was also made for sweeping the pulpit at St. Paul's Cross once a week, and for hanging two lanterns containing lighted candles in a street near the church. The parish officers were two churchwardens, and the ward officers; one common councilman, one inquest, one constable, and one scavenger. There was a parsonage house, which was occupied

by Cokayn, in the north-west corner of Pancras Lane, in Queen Street. The church was destroyed in the Fire of London, and never rebuilt, so that the exact site is doubtful now; but a portion of the churchyard remains, and a few table tombs are still standing. Many civic ceremonies of much interest, from an antiquarian point of view, were celebrated in the church, when the Lord Mayor, attended by the officers and the corporation, took part in religious worship. Under the pastorate of Cokayn, the congregation rapidly increased in numbers and importance. Independency was the fashion of that time. Army officers, members of Parliament, Ministers of State, high civic personages, attended St. Pancras. George Cokayn and the leading members of his congregation always professed Independent principles.

But their profession never changed with

the change time brought in the fashion of religious belief. When Cokayn was ejected from Soper Lane, his congregation went out after him. The worshippers in Redcross Street are identical with those of Pancras. A few distinguished persons can be traced from 1648, until the period of their deaths, in active co-operation with Cokayn. By far the most distinguished member of the Pancras congregation was Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke, one of the Lord Commissioners of the Great Seal. Lord Campbell characterises him "as one of the most interesting as well as amiable characters of the age in which he lived." His "Memorials of English Affairs" have furnished every modern historian with materials. Carlyle quotes him upwards of a hundred times in his life of Cromwell. As a lawyer his reputation* is honoured as a "zealous and enlightened law-reformer."

* Lord Campbell.

In Parliament he occupied the forefront before Cromwell took possession of the helm of affairs. Three times he was chosen a Commissioner to treat of peace with Charles I. He was consulted by the leading politicians of the age. Archbishop Laud had the direction of his studies at college; Bishop Juxon was his fellow-student; Selden and Hyde were his intimate friends; Widdrington was his fellow-commissioner of the Great Seal; he fought with Hampden, and Cromwell took counsel with him as to the policy of assuming regal powers. Through all the varying changes of that stirring age he was the acknowledged counsellor of all parties in difficulties of a legal and technical character; but he never attached himself to any particular party. In the Civil War he always spoke on behalf of peace; in the treatment of the King he resolutely opposed his death; no deed of violence was ever countenanced by him. He was in

religious matters an Independent; favouring liberty of conscience for all dissenters. His principles were severely tested. Once he was summoned before the Council of State, because, as Recorder of Abingdon, he would not prosecute some stiff-necked Nonconformists. Upon another occasion he was directed by Parliament to prepare a charge upon which to try Archbishop Laud, but refused, and being questioned thereupon in the House, replied, "The archbishop did me the favour to take special care of my breeding at St. John's College, Oxford, and it would be disingenuous and ungrateful in me, the pupil, to be personally the instrument of taking the life of a man who has been so instrumental for the bettering of mine."* Amongst

* A deep religious feeling was implanted in his mind when twenty-five by an extraordinary family occurrence. He was residing at the time near Henley, at Fawley Court. One Whitsuntide he drove his mother thither. She insisted upon walking under the avenue of limes which led to the

religious men he was held in such high esteem as to be appointed a member of the Assembly of Divines, who sat for the purpose of settling the religion of the country. There are three incidents in his career which are worthy of special note. After the battle of Marston Moor, a meeting of leading politicians was held in Whitehall, at which Sir Bulstrode was consulted as to the means which should be adopted to get rid of the "Incendiary" Cromwell. Sir Bulstrode recommended that he should be let alone. Upon another occasion Cromwell and Henry Ireton went home with Whitelocke to supper, and the two guests entertained their host with stories until midnight. When Cromwell and Ireton left, they were arrested by a street patrol for being out of doors beyond the prescribed mansion, and reasoned with her son against fear of death. At supper she drank to the whole household a solemn farewell; and next morning was found dead in bed, her hands raised in the attitude of prayer.

hour without passes. The most memorable interview between Whitelocke and Cromwell took place one summer's evening in St. James's Park. They met accidentally under the trees by the lake, and Cromwell asked Sir Bulstrode what objection there was to his assumption of regal authority. The reply was unfavourable, and an estrangement took place between them. In consequence of a family connection with Berkshire, Sir Bulstrode took a warm interest in George Cokayn, and their friendship continued until death.

Alderman Tichborne is the first named by Calamy, and his connection with Cokayn is demonstrated by incontrovertible evidence. He obtained a seat in Parliament during the Civil War through the influence of his City friends, and quickly advanced in favour not only with his brother members, but also with the public. The first office

which he filled was that of Lieutenant of the Tower, and he little thought then that he would terminate his career within the walls of that gloomy fortress. There is one incident in his early life which will not be thought uninteresting now. In 1647 there was considerable disaffection amongst the army officers, but they ultimately acknowledged their error, and in December Parliament selected three members of their body to hold a prayer meeting with the penitent men. Those chosen were Tichborne, Henry Ireton, and Oliver Cromwell. Tichborne was a young man of little experience in political matters, and committed one error which he afterwards bitterly repented. But when Cokayn preached his first sermon at Pancras, no sorrow dimmed the prospect of his future life. He was rapidly advancing in favour both in the City and in Parliament, and he was blest with the possession of a

loving and devoted wife, of whom we shall hear more when the clouds have gathered about her husband's path. For the present Anne Tichborne may well occupy an enviable position amongst the matrons of Pancras, so bright and happy does the future promise of her life appear.

Colonel Rowland Wilson and Mary, his wife, were two more members of the congregation. Her maiden name was Carleton, and she had one sister. Both sisters were celebrated for their beauty, and married young. Rowland Wilson was only twenty years of age when he espoused Mary, who was not older than himself. She was of a gentle and loving disposition, and possessed a cultivated mind. He was the only son of his father, and with him partner in a firm of wealthy foreign merchants. One ship of theirs which was captured by the Duke of Monmouth during the Civil War,

had £20,000 on board, the whole of which was thereby lost. His public advancement was rapid. By his father's influence he became a member of Parliament, and as Colonel of the Orange regiment of City Train Bands, he took part in the reduction of Newport Pannel.* At this time he was only thirty-one years of age, and the excessive fatigue he underwent threw him into a consumption. He was elected an alderman of the City of London when only thirty-three, and chosen one of the Council of State at thirty-five. During a brilliant but short career, he won the esteem of all parties in the City and Government. A more charming couple did not exist in the congregation. They were young and wealthy. Their City residence was in Bishopsgate Street, where they entertained a numerous circle of friends; and the curiosities which

* "Memorials of English Affairs," by Sir B. Whitelocke.

adorned the rooms, brought from distant portions of the world, had an exaggerated importance amongst the common people. It was particularly well known, amongst other things, that in Rowland Wilson's house* were some parrots that talked like human beings. A deeper and more precious insight into their characters will be furnished hereafter. At the time of which we write dreams of future advancement and long years of married joys flitted through the minds of each.

John Ireton, who is named by Calamy, was the brother of Henry Ireton, Cromwell's son-in-law. He had not at this time risen to any conspicuous eminence in the City, and was not a member of Parliament. As a captain in the army, he took part with Cromwell in the siege of Bristol, where he sustained a broken arm; but it was not

* Noble's "Lives of the Regicides."

until near the close of the Protectorate that he came into prominence.

Samuel Wilson and John Moore, the other two mentioned in Calamy, had not done anything at this period which entitles them to special mention. They were members of the congregation, and in their turn played conspicuous parts in the social or political history of the country. There were a number of others whose names may be mentioned who became members of the congregation soon after Cokayn's appointment — City merchants, tradesmen, and others. William Pendlebury; Jeremy Rawstorne, merchant tailor; Henry Lyte; Jacob Willett, of St. Laurence Lane; Benjamin Clarke, who sold fringed gloves at a shop in Fleet Street, will reappear in the course of the story. Besides these there were, of course, many others whose names will never be recovered. When an occasional service was held in

the evening, the church was lighted with candles, and the rich folk brought their male servants armed with staves to beat off the rogues as they returned home through the narrow streets. The tradesmen were escorted by their apprentices armed in like manner. To keep these serving lads and waiting men in order during service would occupy all the time of the ward officials. Upon dark nights, lanterns or torches were made use of, and the journey to and from church was one full of adventure, if not of serious risk. The service of the church was strictly Independent. There was no use made of the Prayer-Book; but the minister prayed extempore. The psalms of David were sung by the whole congregation, and the sermon occupied the chief portion of the service. As to the doctrine preached, we obtain the best evidence from the published works of Cokayn. These show him to

have been far in advance of many of the ministers of his own time. In the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion he held those which were common to all the churches ; but he differed from many in the breadth of his Calvinistic opinions, and he outstripped all in the catholicity of his views with regard to liberty of conscience. This was a grand distinction for a preacher in the age to which he belonged.

CHAPTER II.

Parliamentary Fast Days—Divine Service at Margaret's, Westminster—George Cokayn invited to preach—Scene in the Churchyard—The Congregation—Description of the Preacher—The Sermon—Plea for Toleration—Demands Liberty of Conscience for the Godly—Thanks of the House passed to him—Pride's Purge—Preface to the Sermon—Motto of Cokayn's Life: Duty and Christ—His Belief in the Millennium—Invited to preach a Second Time—Declines the Honour—Execution of Charles—Colonel Wilson and Sir B. Whitelocke oppose the Trial—Tichborne sits as Judge, and signs the Death-Warrant—His subsequent Regret.

IT was the custom at this time for the House of Commons to keep a day of fast monthly, when the members attended St. Margaret's Church, and selected preachers prayed and preached. To be invited to preach was an honour which was highly esteemed by the ministers. In October,

1648, two ministers were chosen to preach upon the 29th of November, and only one accepted the invitation. This was Obadiah Sedgwick. Mr. Gurnall declined, and then Mr. Faireclough was invited. When the refusal of Mr. Faireclough was reported to the House on November 17, George Cokayn's name was mentioned for the first time. Therefore he only had twelve days in which to prepare his sermon. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Independents had in turn occupied the pulpit at St. Margaret's, and the constant repetition of the service tended to make politicians of some of the preachers. One, at least, in the time of the second Charles, lost his head for a sermon which he preached. George Cokayn was twenty-nine years old when he preached before the House.

The scene upon the occasion of these fast sermons was one of much interest.

Round about the church were posted those psalm-singing soldiers, in leather-jerkins, who made such irresistible thrusts with pikestaff or halberd in their conflicts with the king's soldiers; men who wanted to settle the nation, and religion also, after a thorough military fashion. Upon the occasion of Cokayn's sermon there were many present who never after mixed with the same throng in the church. In the Speaker's pew sat Lenthall, and scattered about were Seldon, Bradshaw, Sir Thomas Widdrington, and many others, with respect to whom Colonel Pride had a commission at that moment in his pocket. Several of these men were excluded from the House of Commons before the sermon they heard on November 29th was out of the press. There were a few present specially interested in the success of the young preacher. Amongst these were Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke, Colonel

Rowland Wilson, and Alderman Robert Tichborne. Glancing round upon that assembly, men will be recognised who helped to rule England for ten years without a State church, a House of Lords, or a king. A congregation of flowing-haired, white-collared, velvet-coated men—men who wore great jack-boots and short laced breeches; men who did very much to secure the civil rights of the people of England, and establish liberty of conscience towards God. To these men, whose king was then a prisoner in Carisbrook Castle, and whose soldiers had completely beaten down their enemies, Obadiah Sedgwick and George Cokayn preached. The junior preached last. After the first sermon, a psalm was sung, and then George Cokayn appeared in the pulpit. Rich brown hair, parted in the centre of the forehead, flowed down in clustered masses over his shoulders. His face shone with



THE REV. GEORGE COKAYN.



ruddy health, and was aglow with enthusiasm. To the charms of his person were superadded a vigorous intellect and a natural eloquence which irresistibly won the hearts of his hearers. He wore the Geneva gown and bands common to the Independents and Presbyterians.

He chose for his text Psalm lxxxii., verses 6, 7, and 8: "I have said, Ye are gods: and all of you are children of the most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations." The sermon opened with a declaration that all men were within God's view, and that He had stretched out a line amongst them and laid judgment to it, whereby the disproportion of men's ways to the will of God were made visible. He divided his subject into two parts—the Flesh and the Spirit; and, after a short explanation of these, he

divided and subdivided the matter of his sermon, until he accumulated thirty-two separate points. The patience of hearers of the Gospel in those days never was matched. With heroic boldness he set forth the honour and glory of all earthly powers, and their exact relation to God. Then with amazing vigour he denounced the vacillating policy which had manifested itself amongst the members of Parliament. Finally, he pleaded that every religious sect might have perfect freedom granted to them in their worship. After allusions to special difficulties which then beset the House, he appealed to them for freedom of religious worship. "Take heed," he said, "how you oppose the Spirit of God and the spiritual worship of God." There were many crying out for toleration in those days; but it was not so wide in its scope as that for which Cokayn pleaded. Toleration was generally under-

stood to mean full freedom of religious worship for one sect, and a limited freedom for others; but the plea which the preacher set forth was for all "those which in truth worship God in Spirit." Before long Cokayn realised how certain of the sects, not resting satisfied with freedom of religious worship, sought exclusive privileges and lusted after place and power; but throughout a long and active ministerial career, he advocated the right of all the godly to equal privileges with the Independents.

The service occupied between three and four hours; and at its close Cokayn's friends congratulated him warmly upon the ability displayed in his sermon. When the House assembled for business, Colonel Rowland Wilson was directed to present thanks to Cokayn for the sermon which he preached.

The preface, which was dated December 11, contains direct allusions to Pride's

Purge, which commenced December 6. There are two sentences also in it which, put together, display the guiding principle of his life: "*Turn not your backs upon your duties: walk in a direct line to Christ.*" These words, addressed to the members of the Long Parliament in 1648, were applied by Cokayn afterwards to every member of his church, and they are as applicable now as when they were first spoken. The title-page of the sermon furnishes a glimpse of his character not previously discoverable. It reads thus: "Flesh expiring and the Spirit inspiring in the new earth, or God himself supplying the room of withered powers, judging and inheriting all nations." Throughout the discourse the same feeling struggles for utterance. The reign of God had begun—the millennium of peace, and joy, and spiritual concord had commenced. In other sermons

of the same time this belief was plainly expressed, and it led in after years to one of the most remarkable insurrections to which religious fanaticism ever gave birth. Not many years elapsed before Cokayn found out his mistake; but though disappointed, he laboured on under the impulse of those sentences, the essence of which were duty, as comprehending man, and Christ, as the supreme object of life.

His sermon gave more than ordinary satisfaction to the House, and on the 18th of December, only seven days after he wrote his preface, he was again asked to preach. Upon this occasion his name stands first on the journals of the House. He declined the honour, and was never asked again. The reason of his refusal can only be conjectured. He may have disapproved of certain measures which were sanctioned by the House, or his friends may have repre-

sented to him the serious responsibility which would attach to him if he meddled with the politics of the Government. Considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining a preacher for the next fast, and the fact of Cokayn having been named again immediately after his first appearance, shows how highly his sermon was appreciated.

From this time Cokayn devoted himself exclusively to the work of his church. He abstained altogether from taking part in those attempts to settle the religion of the nation, in which Baxter was so conspicuous a labourer; and he was amply repaid for his devotion by the manner in which the members of his church supported him after his ejection.

The execution of Charles the First in 1649, was not succeeded by that settlement of the nation which the rulers hoped. Colonel

Rowland Wilson* was one of the commissioners chosen to sit upon the king's trial, and though urged with much vehemence to act, resolutely refused. Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke also abstained from taking part in the trial, although he thereby ran great risk. He left London during several of the most important days, and when the king was executed he spent several hours in prayer. Tichborne did sit upon the trial, and attached his name to the death-warrant. He was carried away by the example of his seniors in position and experience; but the part he took was a source of unceasing sorrow to him during the remainder of his life.

* "Memorials of the English Affairs."

CHAPTER III.

Death of Lady Whitelocke—Colonel Rowland Wilson dies—
The Funeral Ceremony—Singular Record of the Event—
Colonel Wilson's Character—Sir Bulstrode's Testimony—
Mary Wilson's Diary—Conversation with her Dying Husband—His Last Wishes—Mary's Grief at his Death—Her Treatment by her Father-in-law—Her Faith and Resignation—The Funeral Sermon—Preface by Cokayn—Samuel Wilson buys Gloves in Fleet Street—Mary Wilson's Story of her Wooers—Her Mother in Holland—She flies from London—Sir Bulstrode follows her—She accepts him—Cites Scriptural Reasons—Surprise of her Friends—The Marriage—Birth of her Son Samuel.

THE year 1649 was memorable in the annals of Pancras through the death of Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke's second wife, a daughter of Lord Willoughby, of Parham. By his two wives he had ten children. Cokayn's position as chaplain necessarily brought him much in contact with Sir Bulstrode, and at

a time of such deep sorrow he was found an invaluable comforter. In the beginning of 1650 death again visited the congregation. Colonel Rowland Wilson died February 19, in the year of his shrievalty. His loss was publicly mourned, and members of the House of Commons united with civic authorities in a procession at his funeral. The little church of Pancras was too small to hold all the mourners, and the service took place in Peter's Church, Cornhill. A youth named Samuel Crispe followed the procession from the house of deceased in Bishopsgate Street to the church, and from thence to the grave in the churchyard of Martin Outwich. When he became a man, he wrote on the fly-leaf of the funeral sermon* which was preached details of what he saw; and to him we are indebted for several interesting facts. He gives the following statement of

* This sermon is in Dr. Williams's Library.

the procession: "Attendants. His father, most hurt. All his relations, about fifty, in long mourning. Lord President Bradshaw and the Council of State. A great part of the Parliament House. The most of the aldermen, and, I think, the Lord Mayor. The officers of his regiment, the Orange; a vast number of friends and citizens; about 1200 in all." This shows the public estimation in which he was held; but far more interesting particulars, as tending to develop his character, are furnished by a diary of his widow. She thus narrates the closing incidents of their married life: *

"About a fortnight before my dear and precious husband died, he spoke to me concerning his intention for to make a will. I desired him to take no other care of me, but to leave me so as I might live like his widow; nay, I did desire him for to leave me

* "Life of Sir B. Whitelocke."

nothing, but during my widowhood. For thereby I thought I should not be troubled with any motions for to alter my condition, if God should ever lay that sad affliction upon me. My husband told me I was young, and it was fit that I should marry, and he left that to me to do as God should direct me, and he would very often say he hoped I should live and see many happy days when he was dead and gone; that I thought was impossible; but with God all things are possible."

From another passage in Mary Wilson's diary we infer that the marriage had not been one which Colonel Wilson's parents approved. She writes: "I must confess God was so good to me in that night in which my husband died, to move the hearts of his father and mother for to pity me; and, indeed, at that time I was a sad object to move pity in the hardest hearts. But the

next day, when his parents did understand he had made his will and left me full, and had left all his estate unto me, they did foam and rage both against me and him, so that I think the like was never seen. His father came to my bed-side the very next day after his son, his only son, died, and told me I should not have one penny more than the extremity of the law would give me; but God turned his cruelty into good for me; for if it had not been for his hard usage, I think I should have sunk under my sharp affliction and unspeakable loss. God can bring good out of evil, so he did for me; for by that means I was forced out of my bed and chamber. The first time I went out of my chamber was to ask counsel of some lawyers. My cause was so just, that my father-in-law's own lawyers gave their judgment for me; but my father would be ruled by none. My husband died a Member

of Parliament and one of the Council of State. He was so good a man that all who knew him did show love and pity to me for his sake. Some of the chief members of the Parliament House, knowing what a hard-hearted man my father-in-law was, sent to me, and told me, if need were, there should come forty or fifty of their fellow-members to speak with him, and to tell him that they would take care of me, so that he should not wrong me, for they said the memory of my dear husband was very precious unto them. I returned them very many thanks, and told them I hoped God would order all things for my good in the end, for I could not endure to go to law with my dear husband's father, notwithstanding his hard usage of me. At last he was persuaded to make an end, and I did compound for a sum of money for quietness' sake. I thought it was a good thing to have peace with all men, and I was so sad for

my loss." She tells her story with such pathos, that it is difficult to believe she mourned and wept more than two hundred years ago.

Sir Bulstrode says of Colonel Wilson: *
"Though but a young man yet, he was an elder in wisdom and abilities. He was a gentleman of excellent parts and great piety, of a solid, sober temper and judgment, and very honest and just in all his actions. He was beloved both in the House, City, and army, and by all that knew him, and his death as much lamented."

The Rev. Obadiah Sedgwick, B.D., who was at that time minister of the Gospel at Covent Garden, preached the funeral sermon. It is intituled, "Christ the Life and Death the Gain of every True Believer: or, the Life of a Saint resolved into Christ, and his Death into Gain. Held forth clearly in a Sermon preached at the late sad and

* "Memorials of the English Affairs."

solemn funeral of the Right Worshipful Rowland Wilson, Esq., a Member of the Parliament of England and of the Honourable Council of State, and one of the Aldermen and Sheriffs of the City of London.” “ Together with an Epistle Dedicatory : wherein is an exact account given upon some years’ more than ordinary experience of the superlative worth of this eminent servant of Christ and of the Commonwealth. By George Cokayn.”

In this preface all the merits of the deceased are set forth in the peculiar phraseology acceptable at that period.

“ He was a Timotheus in the Commonwealth,” says Cokayn, “ naturally caring for their State. He was indeed, by the Providence of God, in a very short time called to several places of highest honour and greatest trust amongst us, wherein he always behaved himself, though as a ruler over the

persons of men, yet as a true servant to the good of men: as in his private, so in his public capacity, no one's less than his own. He still desired that justice might be as a river, and never coveted to pale it in as a pond for his private use. He delighted immediately to serve the public, and at the most but collaterally himself. Yea, many a time hath he vigorously and heartily appeared against his own private interest, that he might approve himself a faithful friend to the public. I know nothing he got by all his service, except Thrasybulus his reward, a crown of two branches, bays, whereby he never contracted the people's envy, but to his last had an interest in all men's good word and affection. And (which was the crown of all) he ever stood firm to his principles, and could never be justly numbered amongst them who were given to change, always abhorring to wear the glove which

would fit both hands. If at any time he went with the stream, it was because the stream went with him; and still as the tide turned, he owned his principles, and boldly adventured to swim against it. No one can charge him to be like the bulrush, which always waves with the wind; but all that knew him can, without falsehood or flattery, affirm that nothing could move him but reason and honesty. The truth is, he was in this capacity a man so excelling, that every one was ambitious (as they were about Homer) to prove him to be his countryman."

Cokayn admired Wilson because there was so much in him which was akin to his own nature; that noble independence to which he alluded was well brought out. "Shortly before he died," proceeds Cokayn, "being asked by a friend whom he loved, How it was with his Spirit? his answer presently was, 'I have now no trouble to wrestle

with, but the unwillingness of those that are dear to me to submit to the will of the Lord concerning me,' expressing in himself much joy and satisfaction in his expectation of the sudden accomplishment of God's good pleasure." The text chosen by Sedgwick was Phil. i. 21: "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." In the course of the sermon, the preacher says of Wilson, "He was an humble Christian under all those eminent places of service unto which he was called. For one who lived so short a space of time (he lived not above thirty-six years in all), he was advanced to as many, and (as the times now are) to as great places of employment, as any of his rank (I think) in the land. To be a Parliament-man. To be of the Council of State. To be a Justice in the country. To be an alderman and sheriff of this great city."

The Wilson who is mentioned by Calamy

was probably one who bore the Christian name of Samuel. He married Mary Wilson's sister, and was possibly cousin to Rowland Wilson. The firm of Wilson was a large and important one, and from statements in the State Papers, the identification with the firm in which Colonel Wilson and his father were partners is fairly presumable. Their ships traded to all parts of the globe. They did business with agents in the Indies, New England, Nova Scotia, and the Canary Isles. Samuel Wilson was a capital specimen of an English merchant of that age. He lived in the country, near the Tower, and he kept a private barge at his own wharf. In politics he was a Whig; in religion an Independent. He was of a frank and outspoken character, and his boldness frequently involved him in trouble. Nearly two hundred years ago he bought a pair of fringed gloves at a shop in Fleet Street, and that trifling

purchase is mentioned in an important State Paper.

With such persons as these amongst his congregation, Cokayn found his time amply employed, and the result of his influence is apparent in the lives of the leading men whose names have been preserved. As chaplain to Sir Bulstrode, he had on important occasions to conduct religious services at his house, and during his widowhood Cokayn was a constant visitor at the Lord Chancellor's Chelsea residence. Nor was sweet Mary Wilson, the young widow, uncared for by him. He was her adviser and comforter in that time of anguish and sorrow she has so pathetically described in her diary, and afterwards she took counsel with him when a certain period of mourning elapsed, and suitors wooed her. She was young, fair, and rich, and lovers approached her long before she harboured a thought for

herself about second marriage. She tells her own tale best. "I had very many matches offered me, but I could not bring my heart to like any, so that out of very many offers, which were persons both rich and honourable, I could not fix my heart upon any one. I would often wish to go to the grave to my dead husband, rather than to be married to the best husband in the world; and when I did not know what to do nor how to be quiet, then I was in great straits. My own father was dead many years before, and my mother was then in Holland, and had been there for many years, so that she was altogether a stranger to those gentlemen who were well-wished to me, which made her incapable of giving me her advice. Besides, I had very few other friends to advise with, so that I was in a great strait, some telling me I did sin if I did not marry, because I should decay my natural life with

my overmuch sorrow, and whom to chuse I knew not, for all were alike to me. At last I went to God by prayer, and did lay my condition before the Lord, and did beg of Him, that if it were His good pleasure to have me alter my condition, that He would chuse out a fitting match for me, as for my own part I did slight riches and honors."

There was about this time a certain knight who consulted Cokayn upon the delicate subject of marriage.

"When I was in this sweet frame of spirit," Mary proceeds, "amongst many others there came a grave gentleman that had ten children, which at the first notice did startle me, and did cause all my friends to be against it. But after I had spent very much time in seeking God to direct me, at last I was brought to consider that children were a blessing—'Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them, they shall not be

ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.' And seeing they were a blessing and the gift of God, as you may see in Psalm cxxviii., the 3rd and 4th verses, there the Lord saith, 'Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord,'—so that I durst not refuse a man for having ten blessings. Nay, though he told me he would settle all his estate upon his other children, I durst not refuse him for that neither, for I knew if God would give me any children that He was able to provide for them. And in marrying him, I thought I might be in a capacity to do some good amongst those children. It is true he was at that time in a very honourable place of trust in the nation, being one of the Lords Commissioners of the Great Seal, but his great office was

no motive to move me, for I had before refused both riches and very great honors. But I did consider he was in a place wherein he might do much good to the people of God, and I thought by marrying of him I might be an instrument in God's hand to move him to do more for God, and for the good of his people. As for estate, I did not need to stand upon that, for I knew that if God should give me any children by him, I should bring something for to maintain them, and if God should not give me any, I had rather he that was to be my husband, and his children should enjoy my estate than any other. If ever a marriage was a fruit of prayer, I think ours was; for I found that after I had laid my condition before God, and did beg of Him to chuse such a man that might be for His honor and glory and my good, then I went away from the house I then did live in, to

a friend's house forty miles from my own house, to see if I could be quiet from all such motions. But God sent him that should be my husband quickly after me, though at that time I had no mind to marry him, yet I was willing to do or to suffer anything whatever was the will of God to have me to do. I must needs say all that knew the gentleman did give me a very good report of him for a very honest, gallant gentleman. When all my friends did see I would have him for my husband, they were much discontented, thinking thereby I should lose much of earthly contentment; but those who wait upon God, they shall not wait in vain. Nay, He hath proclaimed himself to be a God hearing prayers, and He has commanded us to pray unto Him."

So it ultimately came to pass that Mary Wilson, on September 11, 1650, at St. Augustine's Church, Hackney, became Mary

Whitelocke, the third wife of Sir Bulstrode.

“And God did hear my prayers,” her diary proceeds, “and did bless our marriage, for he did give me a great mercy in my husband, and God did bless me. And I did beg of God very much in the time I was so long without any child, that if ever He would give me a child, He would be pleased to make it His child ; and I did promise to God, that if ever He should give me a child, I would do what lay in my power to bring him up in the fear of the Lord, and to dedicate him to His service. So God at last, after sixteen years’ waiting and praying, did give me hope of a child, which was wonderfully preserved, though I had a very great and dangerous fall from off my horse, so that all who were then present did think my life was in danger. I was so very ill with the bruise I got in

my fall, that none could think I should escape miscarrying ; but what God will have saved, nothing can hurt or destroy. This I set down, that you, my dear son, may see what God did for you before you were born, so that it may be the stronger engagement upon your heart to love and serve that God, who did keep you from harm even in your mother's womb. And I called your name Samuel, because I had begged you of the Lord. The Lord make you a true Samuel indeed, and I have great hopes the Lord will make you so.”*

These extracts are made from a diary written for her eldest son, and they furnish a charming story of life.

* “Memoirs of Sir Bulstrode.”

CHAPTER IV.

Sir Bulstrode appointed Ambassador to Sweden—He goes to Cople—Visits George Cokayn's Father—Meets with George—Their Conversation—Sir Bulstrode accepts the Mission—Removes his Wife and Family to Samuel Wilson's House—Attends Pancras Church—Service at Wilson's Residence—Farewell Ceremony at Whitehall—Cokayn preaches—The Ambassador and his Wife—Their parting Conversation—The Fleet detained in the River—Prayers at Pancras for Mary Whitelocke—The Birth of another Son—News sent to Sir Bulstrode—The Swedish Ladies learn the English mode of Kissing—Cromwell assumes the Protectorship—Cokayn's Letters to Sir Bulstrode.

WHEN Samuel was a babe of eighteen months, there fell a sore trouble upon Mary, his mother. This was the appointment of her husband as Ambassador to the Queen of Sweden, with whom Cromwell was anxious to negotiate a treaty. England was threatened with an armed combination against her, and it was hoped by the em-

passage to prevent Sweden from uniting with the Dutch. There was another reason why Cromwell desired to get rid of Sir Bulstrode, and that was his avowed hostility to Cromwell assuming kingly powers. The embassy was pressed upon Sir Bulstrode with such vehemence, that he was obliged to accept the duty. Negotiations were carried on by letter and by personal interviews. Sir Bulstrode's chief objection was the state of his wife's health. Before the business was finally settled, the knight went into Bedfordshire, where—a mutilated MS. diary now in the British Museum* states—he slept at the house of Mr. John Cokayn. At that time his host's son George was on a visit home, and Sir Bulstrode consulted him upon the proposals made with respect to the embassy. At the bottom of one page he writes, "Mr. George Cokayn, eldest son

* Whitelocke's MS. "History of the Year 1653."

to the gentleman where I lay—;” there the sentence now ends; the succeeding leaf of the MS. is missing. From the portion that remains, it appears that upon this occasion Sir Bulstrode entrusted Cokayn with the care of his family in the event of his going to Sweden. There is a fragment of some conversation with Cokayn given thus: “—to be careful of my business in case I shall go, and to obey my wife’s commands in my absence. Cokayn: I shall be faithful to you, by the help of God, and careful to obey the commands of my lady and mistress. Much other plain discourse they had about his country affairs, wherein he was more skilled, but rational and honest in all, and very loving to Whitelocke and to his wife and children, and it growing late and after a journey, they were willing to go to rest.”* The next day Sir Bulstrode wrote down

* Whitelocke always speaks of himself in the third person.

his final propositions, and sent them to the President of the Council. After a considerable amount of discussion, the details were settled. Sir Bulstrode was to have a large sum of money for his expenses, and a retinue numbering one hundred persons in all, including a doctor and two chaplains. On his return from the country, Sir Bulstrode and his wife paid a visit to "old Mr. Rowland Wilson,"* so that his daughter-in-law's marriage had not been disapproved by him. Sir Bulstrode then removed his wife and some of his children to the house of Mr. Samuel Wilson, his brother-in-law. The Ambassador had a double object in view. He wanted to be nearer to the City while the preparations were going on for his journey, and to have his wife, who was expecting an illness, settled in the house of her sister before he went away. He assigned

* The MS. Diary.

to different friends certain offices during his absence ; and under date October 18, 1653, there appears the following entry in his journal :* “For private letters he chiefly desired his old friends, Mr. Hall and Mr. Cokayn, now living in his house, and well acquainted with the army, and with many in power, to receive and answer such letters, and Mr. Cokayn constantly to send to him and to act for his affairs here as there might be occasion.” A portion of his family only was removed to the City, and Cokayn had charge of the remainder in Sir Bulstrode’s house at Chelsea. This must have been a pleasant change for Cokayn from his residence in Soper Lane. The journey of the new Ambassador caused immense excitement amongst the worshippers at Pancras, and throughout the City and kingdom generally. Certain entries in his diary show how the journey was regarded

* “Journal of the Swedish Embassy.”

by Sir Bulstrode. Under date October 23rd he writes:* "This Lord's day was at Mr. Cokayn's church, where was a Christian mention and recommendation of me in prayers to God that He would be a protection and blessing to me in my journey." The occasion of this visit drew together a large congregation. Every corner of the old church was occupied. Officers in the army and officers of the Ambassador's fleet mingled with the City magnates and official members of Sir Bulstrode's private retinue. The sermon was one specially prepared for the occasion; but Sir Bulstrode notes only the Christian mention of him in prayer. It was not in public only these services were held. A memorable scene took place about this time in the residence of Samuel Wilson, in order that Sir Bulstrode's wife might, without much inconvenience, be present.

* "Journal of the Swedish Embassy."

This was a sort of family service, to which only a few special friends were invited. "Besides his private and particular seeking of God for his counsel and blessing in this undertaking," says Sir Bulstrode, "he had the prayers of his friends with him : divers of them met in the evening at his brother Wilson's house, several members of Mr. Cokayn's church, and among them Mr. Taylor expounded a place of Scripture very pertinently, and several of them prayed very fondly for Whitelocke and the good success of his business, and divers expounded places of Scripture suitable for the occasion. Whitelocke's wife was present, full of grief, trouble, and passion."* Whitelocke himself spoke to the company to this effect : "Let me and mine be remembered in your prayers." Then adds Sir Bulstrode, "Mr. Cokayn concluded with very pathetical and affectionate prayers

* "October 25, Journal of the Swedish Embassy."

to God on Whitelocke's behalf, very suitable and pertinent to the occasion, and then, it being late, they parted with all love and hearty expressions of good wishes to him." This scene is sketched with graphic power: the members of the household meeting together for prayer and dedication of each other to God; those sons who are going with their father elated with joy, but his wife "full of grief" — the sympathy of friends and relatives falling alike unheeded upon her heart; her sobs breaking forth in the midst of the prayers. Four days after this there was another farewell service of a more ceremonial character in the chapel at Whitehall, at which all the members of the embassy were present. Sir Bulstrode explains that they met together to "seek God for His protection and blessing on them in their intended journey. Mr. Cockayne, Mr. Hugh Peters, and Mr. Ingelo,

one of the chaplains of the suite, prayed and expounded several texts of Scripture, giving good exhortations to all the company with great fervency, and pertinent to the occasion, so that many affirmed they never were at any meeting of the like nature which appeared more spiritual and comfortable to their souls.”*

The MS. Diary, of which mention has already been made, contains references to conversations with his wife, who cherished hopes to the last moment that the mission might be abandoned. She was left with ten children during his absence, and referring to them Sir Bulstrode says, “Most of them are little ones, adding tears and sorrow to their comfortless mother.” In their conversations she calls him “My dearest love,” and he addresses her as “Sweet-heart.” “By all her tears, by all loves, by the pledges of

* The MS. “History of the Year 1653.”

them, by marriage promises and affections," she conjured him not to leave her. But it was too late: he had pledged his word, and must undertake the mission. Then says Mary Whitelocke, "If you must go, though I cannot go with you, yet my prayers shall go with you, that the Lord would preserve you and bring you back again in safety; and when you shall return (as I hope you will), if you find me gone, gone out of this world, this vale of tears and sorrow, yet remember me as a faithful wife, as one that truly loved you and yours; and remember these little ones, be kind to them for my sake, and for their own sakes, who (I hope) will never offend you, nor be undutiful to you. This is the last request I make to you, and I hope my prayers will be heard for you." Floods of tears stopped their further speaking, and the company called upon Whitelocke "to hasten away, telling him that the

tide would stay for no man." He had no sooner descended to the room where some of his people were waiting for him, than a servant ran down-stairs and begged that he would see his wife once more, as she had forgotten to say one sentence. This was the message which she delivered amid tears: "Make it your chiefest care to honor God in all your actions, and to watch over yourself and all your company, that none of you dishonor Him. And often pray to Him for His blessing upon you and them, and on us whom you leave behind, which will be the best way to enlarge our hopes of a happy meeting again." As he turned to leave the room, she said, "The Lord go along with you in all your way." This was a noble sentence with which to part. Sir Bulstrode embarked at the Tower in a small boat, which carried him to the frigate *Phoenix*.

When they reached Gravesend, the wind

was contrary, and the ships had to cast anchor ; and Sir Bulstrode, taking advantage of the delay, returned to London, for the purpose of interchanging once more a tender farewell with his wife. Then he hastened, under cover of the darkness, back again, and the fleet sailed. But when they got to the mouth of the river, a great storm of wind arose, and the fleet was obliged to cast anchor once more. This was upon Sunday. When the time came for evening service at Pancras, Cokayn called upon the congregation to join him in special prayer for a certain lady ; and, before the service ended, he announced that God had heard their prayers, and another son* had been given to Mary Wilson Whitelocke. This event caused a strange bustle in the house of Samuel Wilson. He and Cokayn wrote letters to Sir

* This was Carlton, the second of three sons she bore her husband.

Bulstrode, and despatched them by swift messengers to Gravesend. On arriving there, they lighted huge bonfires on the shore to attract the attention of the mariners. After a time, a boat put off from the *Phoenix*, and brought away the men; and the letters were taken to the Ambassador's cabin. He was suffering from sea-sickness at the time—nevertheless he was overjoyed at the intelligence sent him. There is this entry respecting the letters in his journal:—"His wife was brought to bed about six o'clock on the Lord's day, in the evening, at which very hour the congregation whereof she was a member were in prayer together, and seeking God for her safe delivery; and then this gracious return to their prayers was vouchsafed." He wrote answers while in his bed; and then, to the amazement of all, "the wind came to again very fair for him to proceed on his voyage."

The journey was one of great danger at that particular time. He not only ran the risk of being captured by the Dutch, but he was liable to the danger of assassination; and upon his return an attempt was actually made to poison him, before he finally set sail for England. His adventures on sea and land were duly set forth in a diary, one copy of which is in the British Museum. One incident in his Court-life was exceedingly novel. The Queen of Sweden* asked him to teach her ladies of honour the English mode of kissing; and Sir Bulstrode did so, "most readily," to the infinite satisfaction of the Court ladies.

During his absence, which lasted several months, Cokayn fulfilled the share of duty allotted him in a very faithful manner. He became an immense favourite with Sir Bulstrode's children; he won the esteem of all

* From the Queen he received the honour of knighthood.

the dependents in the great house at Chelsea ; and lost no opportunity of representing his patron's interest at Whitehall. The allusions made by Sir Bulstrode to Cokayn's acquaintance with men of eminence in politics and in learning, indicate him as one of the acknowledged leaders amongst the Independents. Mrs. Whitelocke, as soon as she was able to undertake the journey, returned to Chelsea and to work amongst her little army of adopted children. Amongst the fair Puritan women of that age, none can excel her in devotion or love. Calmly and prayerfully dedicating herself to the great labour of fashioning the hearts and souls of that "quiver-full" which her husband brought her by marriage, her name deserves to be recorded amongst the noblest women of her time.

Cromwell was appointed Protector during the absence of Sir Bulstrode, and intelli-

gence of this was duly forwarded to Sweden. There are fragments in existence of three letters which Cokayn wrote to the great Ambassador in April, 1654, which are very characteristic. The first is dated April 2, and is as follows :—

“You will have leave from his Highness to come away, and I hope it will not be without bringing your business to a happy and an honourable issue, which is the constant subject of our requests to the Lord for you, and I doubt not we shall have a comfortable answer. In the meantime I think [as I have hinted to your Excellence in former letters] it will not be amiss if you draw a good store of bills upon us, though but *pro formâ*, that we may get as much money for you as we can before your return, and that you may have a sufficient overplus to pay all servants’ wages off, which I believe will

amount to a considerable sum ; and, upon this peace, I hope it will be no hard matter to get your bills paid, especially if your Excellence please withal to write to my Lord Protector, and Mr. Thurloe, and some of the Council about it. I could wish that you would make what haste you can home ; for I am informed, by a special hand, that there is great labouring to make a chancellor, whilst you are absent, and to take that opportunity to put you by, whom I believe they doubt to be too much a Christian and an Englishman to trust in their service ; but I hope God will give you a heart to submit to His will, and to prize a good conscience above all the world ; which will, indeed, stand us in stead, when all outward things cannot in the least administer to us.

“ Your Excellency’s most humble Servant,

“ GEO. COKAYN.”

There is a striking mixture in that letter of faith in God, and little trust in any man. In every department of the State there was a lack of money; and the suggestion that Sir Bulstrode should draw largely upon his salary, and leave his agents to dun the Council, was eminently practical.

The second letter referred to a point he had already touched upon, and both letters show the insecure tenure by which office was held, even in Cromwell's time.

"Mr. Thurloe," he writes, "was pleased to acquaint me that it was his Highness's and the Council's pleasure to make some alteration in the Chancery; that it was determined that your lordship, and Sir Thomas Widdrington, and my Lord L'Isle, should have the custody of the Great Seal, and I believe an Act to that purpose will pass within few hours; but I perceive this business was not done without some tugging.

But my Lord Protector and John Thurloe* are true to you; and now I am out of all fears that any affront should be ordered you in your absence. Mr. Mackworth deserves a letter from you; but nothing, I pray, of this business. Indeed, Mr. Thurloe hath played his part gallantly, and like a true friend, for which I shall love him as long as I live."

Cokayn was so absorbed in Sir Bulstrode's business, that he accepted a kindness done for his patron as if it were done for himself.

The third letter is dated April 14, 1654:—

"Your old servant Abel is much courted by his Highness to be his falconer-in-chief, but he will not accept it, except your Excellence had been here to give him your explicit leave to serve his Highness; and told me, without stuttering, that he would not serve the greatest prince in the world, except your

* John Thurloe, Secretary of State.

Excellence were present to make the bargain; that he might wait upon you, with a cast of hawks, at the beginning of September, every year, into Bedfordshire. It is a pity that gallantry should hurt any; certainly it is a noble profession that inspires him with such a spirit."

Abel must have been a noted falconer to have attracted Cromwell's attention; but the faithful fellow preferred his old master to the "greatest prince in the world."

CHAPTER V.

Sir Bulstrode's Return—Honours conferred upon him—Cokayn brings Sir Bulstrode's Sons from Cople—Mrs. George Cokayn—Their Children—Lord Mayor Tichborne—Cokayn's Sermon on Colonel Underwood—Prophetic character of the Discourse—Declares a Revolution at hand—Fulfilment of his Prophecy—Death of Cromwell—Accession of Charles II.—Welcome by the Ministers—Sir John Ireton, Sir Robert Tichborne, and Jacob Willett are apprehended—Speech of Tichborne on his Trial—Sentenced to Imprisonment for Life—Ireton and Willett are released—Sir Bulstrode purchases his Pardon for £50,000—Retires to Chilton Lodge.

ON his voyage home Sir Bulstrode had a narrow escape from shipwreck; and on arriving at Gravesend, he drove straight to Chelsea, to see his wife and child. The mission had been satisfactorily accomplished; and ten days after his return he was elected to Parliament for the city of Oxford, the borough of Bedford, and the county of Buck-

ingham. Honours of every kind flowed in upon him, for the successful accomplishment of his mission.

In May, 1656, a trifling domestic incident furnishes another glimpse of Cokayn. Sir Bulstrode is again the medium of our knowledge. In his personal memorials, under the date mentioned, is the following entry :

“My sons, Willoughby and Bulstrode, being brought from Grandon by reason of their schoolmaster’s death, Mr. Shelborne, who was a very honest good man, and an excellent schoolmaster, by whose death I and my family have a great loss, I caused the boys to be brought from school to Mrs. Cokayn’s house, in Bedfordshire, being but twenty miles from Grandon. I thought it not good to remove them further, because Bulstrode had then an ague, and the ways were bad. But I thank God his ague left him at Mrs. Cokayn’s, and I purposed to have gone down there this

month to have seen the land in Northamptonshire, and to have brought up my boys to London, but the treaty with the Swedish Ambassador hindered me. Mr. George Cokayn and his wife went into Bedfordshire and brought up the boys with them two days before Whitsuntide, to Chelsea, where they were with me the Whitsun week, I thank God, in good health; and the same time I had with me in my house twelve of my children all together, for which mercy and comfort I pray God to make me thankful, and to give his grace and blessing to all my children that they may be instrumental to do Him service. The boys were very wild, by reason of their long being from school."

This is the second reference made by Sir Bulstrode to George Cokayn, and Bedfordshire; and the mention of Mrs. Cokayn only, would lead to the inference that at that time his father was dead. In the same casual way

mention is made of Mrs. George Cokayn for the first time; and once more she is named, many years afterwards, in the will of Sir Bulstrode. Her Christian name was Abigail, and she was the daughter of Mr. Plott. Beyond that we know nothing of her personally. Three children were born to them, John, William, and Elizabeth. They must have lived happily together, or the fact would have been preserved somewhere. In all probability she was a true helpmate for him; partaking of the same fiery spirit which animated him throughout his life, and doing whatever work fell within the scope of a gentle Christian woman in those days.

In 1656,* Robert Tichborne, after having been knighted by Cromwell, was appointed Lord Mayor of London; and throughout the year of his office Pancras became once more,

* Wilson, in his "Dissenting Churches," mentions a tradition that Tichborne occasionally preached.

as it had often been before, the church to which all the great civic potentates gravitated. But his year of office brought him no release from the burden which his conscience bore ; and of all the members of Cokayn's congregation, Sir Robert must have excited in his breast the most tender sympathy. The trial of the knight's penitence had not then arrived ; and during his mayoralty he passed amongst the people as one of the happiest of men because of the high office which he filled. He was succeeded by Sir John Ireton, another Lord Mayor knighted by Cromwell, and member, as we have already mentioned, of the Pancras congregation. He had risen gradually to the honourable office which he held amongst the citizens ; but he never occupied a conspicuous position. John Moore, who was afterwards knighted by Charles II., was at this period an active member of the Church ; but he had not made much progress

amongst those of his fellow-citizens who were ambitious of civic honours. The fact that two members of the congregation attained the high dignity of Lord Mayor, attests the position which Pancras held under Cokayn in the time of Cromwell. Whatever may have been the rank her congregation took in former years, through Cokayn she rose to greatest celebrity, and when he went out, the church fell into rapid decay. No successor, if one was ever appointed, drew a congregation, and the parish was added to a neighbouring one after the Great Fire.

The last ministerial act, of which there is any record, prior to the ejectment of Cokayn, was his preaching a funeral sermon on Colonel William Underwood, in Stephen's, Walbrook, January, 1658.* Nothing is known about him now, and the sermon says very little. He was an alderman of the City, and

* Old style ; January, 1659, new style of reckoning.

a man of eminence in the Church. No sketch of his life is furnished by the sermon, which the preacher expressly warrants, because of the dislike which the deceased had of anything approaching to a panegyric on the death of a good man. In the closing sentences of the discourse, this reference is made to him: "He that is now with God, whose dust you here mourn over, was a prince, indeed, in the best sense, a prince that had power with God and prevailed. A great man he was, because a good man, a man of a large heart and affections toward God and towards His house." Many eminent men had died in the previous two years; and the sermon, read now by the light of subsequent events, appears prophetic. The text was, "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." He dwells

most emphatically upon the latter portion of the text; that the deaths of so many righteous men was a certain indication of impending evil. One or two passages will serve to indicate the character of the discourse. "Oh! consider, consider, it is a present evil to be deprived of these men, but that which it bodes is far greater; it is a certain and true prognostication of some sad, dismal revolution at hand." "Do you see God make haste to gather his people apace into rest: be assured that the destroying angel is upon the wing, ready to execute his commission upon the world." "Woe to that nation or city, from the midst of whom the Lord takes away his own precious servants. I must, upon this account, proclaim the vengeance of the Lord against England and London; though there were no other concurrent signs, yet this one, viz., the Lord's removing so fast his people by death, betokens the succession of a black

and gloomy day. Oh! surely the plucking up the stakes doth plainly foretell the hedge will not stand long." Within eight months from the delivery of that sermon Oliver Cromwell died; and troubles came upon the godly like a flood. Ministers were ejected from their livings,—Cokayn was one of the first to suffer in that way; lying informers dogged godly men and women about the streets; and every gaol in London was filled with God-serving people: and in such events as those Cokayn saw the realisation of all he foretold when he preached upon the death of Colonel Underwood. On the title-page of the sermon, Cokayn styles himself "unworthy" minister of Pancras. Only nine years had elapsed since he preached the sermon before the House of Commons, one of the heralds of the Fifth-Monarchy, and all his hopes had faded. They were further off from the setting up of the kingdom of Jesus Christ than he imagined. The little world of London

had not acknowledged King Jesus; Christianity had not been inwrought with the social life of the nation; the Church was full of confusion; the army was as restless as ever; parliament after parliament was dissolved without having accomplished any good work; there were rumours of wars on every hand; and those sects for which he so earnestly pleaded, had abused the liberty of conscience which they had enjoyed. In such a time as this died Oliver Cromwell. Confusion followed. Then King Charles II. came over to England; his lips full of protestations about religion and religious freedom, but deceit in his heart. He was welcomed with the most extraordinary demonstrations of joy by the major portion of the nation. In London, Maypoles were erected in the principal streets, and decked with ribbons and flowers. Bonfires were lighted in the streets at night; and for several days, the fronts of the picturesque timber

houses were decorated with tapestry and coloured cloths, and the streets were festooned with strings of flowers. Amongst those who welcomed him to London, relying upon his promises, were the ministers : and to one petition the name of George Cokayn was appended. The accession of the king was followed by the immediate downfall of Independency ; and Presbyterianism recommenced her struggle with Episcopacy for the place of power.

Keeping strictly within the limits of our story, we now have to follow the fortunes and misfortunes of such members of the congregation as we have become acquainted with. Sir John Ireton, who served the office of Sheriff in 1651, became Lord Mayor in 1658, having succeeded in the chief office Sir Robert Tichborne. Those two, together with Jacob Willett, were amongst the first apprehended ; but through some bungling

their warrants were cancelled, and they were again set at liberty. Subsequently, early in the month of May, 1660, Sir Robert Tichborne, as one of the king's judges, surrendered himself, under a proclamation which was issued, and spent the remainder of a long life in prison. Upon his trial at the Old Bailey, October 16, he made a speech which lays bare his character and enables us to form the best judgment of him. "My lord," he said to the Chief Baron, "when I first pleaded to the indictment it was 'not guilty in manner and form as I stood indicted.' My lord, it was not then in my heart either to deny or justify any tittle of the matter of fact. My lord, the matter that I was led into by ignorance my conscience leads me to acknowledge. Yet, my lord, if I should have said guilty in manner and form as I stood indicted, I was fearful I should have charged my own conscience as then knowingly and maliciously to

act it. My lord, it was my unhappiness to be called to so sad a work when I had so few years over my head, a person neither bred up in the laws nor in parliaments where laws are made. I can say with a clear conscience I had no more enmity in my heart to his Majesty than I did to my wife that lay in my bosom. My lord, I shall deny nothing. After I was summoned I think truly I was at most of the meetings, and I do also say this, that I did not intend to say it before to preserve that salvo to my own conscience that I did not maliciously and knowingly do it. I think I am bound in conscience to own it. As I do not deny but I was there, so truly I do believe I did sign the instrument; and had I known then what I do now (I do not mean, my lord, my afflictions and sufferings, it is not my sufferings make me acknowledge), I would have chosen a red-hot oven to go into as soon as that meeting. I bless God, I do

this neither out of fear, or hope of favour ; though the penalty that may attend this acknowledgment may be grievous. My lord, I do acknowledge the matter of fact, and do solemnly protest I was led into it for want of years. I do not justify either the act or the person. I was so unhappy then as to be ignorant, and I hope shall not now (since I have more light) justify that which I was ignorant of. I am sure my heart was without malice. If I had been only asked in matter of fact at first, I should have said the same. I have seen a little. The great God before whom we all stand, hath shown his tender mercy to persons upon repentance. Paul tells us, though a blasphemer and persecutor of Christ, it being done ignorantly, upon repentance he found mercy. My lord, mercy I have found, and I do not doubt but mercy I shall find. My lord, I came in upon the proclamation, and now I am here.

I have in truth given your lordship a clear and full account, whatever the law shall pronounce, because I was ignorant, yet I hope there will be room found for that mercy and grace that I think was intended by the proclamation, and I hope by the parliament of England. I shall say no more of that, humbly begging that your lordship will be instrumental to the king and parliament on that behalf."

The Counsel.—"We shall give no evidence against the prisoner. He says he did it ignorantly, and I hope, and do believe, he is penitent, and as far as the parliament thinks fit to show mercy, shall be very glad."

At a subsequent time, when the Lord Chief Baron was summing up the case against several of the prisoners, he alluded to the speech and case of Tichborne in these terms: "As for Robert Tichborne he hath spoken very fully; and truly very conscien-

tiously. . . . Upon the whole matter, he acknowledges his ignorance, his sorrow, his conviction in point of conscience; and I beseech God Almighty to incline his heart more and more to repentance. They that crucified Christ (to use his own words) through ignorance, found mercy."

Tichborne was ultimately ordered to be imprisoned for life. Sir John Ireton, after his release from the informal arrest, escaped further molestation for a short time. Jacob Willett was not afterwards apprehended; and the cause of his arrest in the first instance is not mentioned. He was an eminent citizen, and that is all which is now known of him. Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke was, upon petition, excepted from the penalty of death, and commuted what was termed his treasonable connection with the previous government upon payment of £50,000. This enormous sum was raised by the sale of a portion

of his estates, and the mortgage of the remainder. When he presented the money to the king, his Majesty handed him a pardon engrossed upon parchment, which is still in existence. Sir Bulstrode, after this, retired from public life, and spent the remainder of his days with Mary his wife and their family, at Chilton Lodge, Wiltshire.



SIR BULSTRODE WHITELOCKE.

Ætat. 28.

From a Painting the property of George Whitelocke Lloyd, Esq.

CHAPTER VI.

Passing of the Ministers' Bill—Ejectment of Cokayn—Calamy's Statement—Persecution of the Godly—John Bunyan in Prison—Cokayn preaches in the City Churches—Fanatics—Venner's Insurrection—Public Worship restrained—Spies and Informers—Birth of John Nesbitt—Information sworn against Cokayn, October, 1661—Second Information in December—Mrs. Tichborne—Her Husband's Estate divided amongst Courtiers and others—His Removal to the Scilly Isles—Anne Tichborne sends a Servant to her Husband—Petitions for his return to England—Sir Robert is brought to Dover Castle—His Wife shares his Imprisonment—The Prisoner is removed to the Tower—Fellow Prisoners—His Death in 1682.

WHILE the trial of the regicides was proceeding, Parliament was busily employed with the new settlement of religion. A Ministers' Bill was passed which called upon all to submit themselves to reordination at once. Under the provisions of this Bill, Cokayn either voluntarily left,

or was ejected from the church. It is doubtful whether a successor was ever appointed, and so little interest was felt in the church, that after its destruction in the Great Fire, it was not rebuilt.

From the date of Tichborne's arrest, it is clear that Calamy was in error when he spoke of him as adhering to Cokayn after his ejection. Sir John Ireton could only have been a very occasional hearer of him also, for several years afterwards, because he spent some time in prison soon after the Restoration, and when released was in hiding for a time. But at the time Calamy wrote, the connection of both those men was a tradition of the church, and with respect to one there is indisputable evidence of the correctness of the statement. Samuel Wilson and Sir John Moore were the only two out of the four who may be said to have adhered to Cokayn after he left Pancras, and that

fact will serve to throw considerable light upon the subsequent portion of our story. The year 1660 was pregnant with misfortune for the church; before it closed, the congregation was scattered—some of the members were in prison; many plunged into endless sorrow; and the minister was unbeneficed. But the Church, though dispersed, was not dismembered. Worship in the old form was maintained in the houses of the people, and George Cokayn went from house to house, preaching, with more earnestness than ever, his noble sermons upon Duty, and Christ. The year that witnessed his ejection from Pancras has since become celebrated as the year in which John Bunyan was cast into Bedford prison, and their histories were destined to be so interwoven in the future as to become one of the most sacred heritages of the Church.

We now enter upon the most exciting

period of our history. Persecution invariably develops character; and George Cokayn, with all the members of his congregation who are known to us, save one only, pass through this trying time with unstained characters.

Their lives are disclosed from new sources. Hitherto the journals of the House of Commons, the diaries of statesmen, and funeral sermons, have been the sources of our knowledge; but for the future, the malignant statements of informers, as preserved amongst the miscellaneous papers of the State; memoranda in spy-books relating to dangerous persons; returns to Parliament of wilful breakers of the law; entries in prison records; broadsheets that were hawked about the streets of London two centuries ago; brief references in wills; and the still briefer mention in burial registers, furnish our information. But, from whatever source our

knowledge is derived, the minister and his Church members are always presented doing God's work. Neither the malice of man, nor the presence of death, turned them from their labour. For a time after Cokayn left Pancras, he preached in City churches under the pastoral care of his friends, and he was always welcome. His fame as a preacher invariably attracted crowds. Men and women of high rank were constant attendants upon him.

But this liberty was not long accorded him. The occupants of livings in the time of the first Charles petitioned to be reinstated in their old churches. Eminent men who had been driven out of the Universities for their adherence to the late king re-appeared. Petitions were poured into the House of Lords for a fresh adjustment of Church livings, and the king was importuned for Church preferments. The vacan-

cies created under the Ministers' Act were quickly filled up, and every ejected man became suspected. Episcopacy over-rode Presbyterianism, and all non-adherents to the Church were dubbed Fanatics. Richard Baxter, John Howe, John Goodwin, John Owen, George Cokayn, were amongst the suspected; and a host of others of lesser note. Measures were discussed for securing uniformity in religion before the Fifth-Monarchists broke out into open rebellion. A number of poor men, headed by one Venner, who waited for the coming of Christ, took up arms in His name, and after a conflict with the troops were dispersed. Those captured were executed. Advantage was taken of this to press forward the most severe measures against all Fanatics. Accusations were specially directed against the Independents, as breeders of rebellion, and the ministers of that body drew up a petition disavowing

all sympathy with Venner's party. To this document George Cokayn attached his signature. His tendency to Fifth-Monarchy principles was sensualised upon a subsequent occasion. What he held was the coming of Christ to the spirits of men, but that was a doctrine which few comprehended then. That petty insurrection in the City was made an excuse by the Church party for pressing forward a series of the most cruel and arbitrary laws against those whose only crime was to claim the right of worshipping God according to the dictates of conscience. The first act in this direction rendered Dissenters incapable of serving in offices of trust. Orders to secure uniformity of prayer followed, and these were succeeded by an order in Council against meetings of Anabaptists, Quakers, or other sectaries. They were no longer to meet in large numbers or at unusual times ; and they were restricted

in their assemblies to the bounds of their own parishes. These orders contained the germ of the Conventicle and the Five-mile Acts, under the provisions of which thousands of godly men and women were subjected to the most cruel persecutions. Robbed of goods, driven from homes, thrust into prisons; the best, the purest, and the noblest were exposed to such persecutions as had been unknown since the time of Mary. Spies and informers multiplied rapidly, and the chief officers of State were kept in a constant state of alarm by the reports of intended risings throughout the country. The Quakers were the first to suffer, and gaols in London were filled with them before members of other sects attracted much attention from the spies. In such a time as this there was born in Northumberland one John Nesbitt, who was destined at an early age to become the occupant of

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a London gaol, and afterwards to succeed George Cokayn in the pastorate of Harecourt Chapel. When he was an

“—— infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse’s arms,

Cokayn became for the first time the subject of an information presented to the Secretary of State. The document bears date October 30, 1661, and is from Mr. Ashmole to Sir Edward Nicholas.* He states that Dr. Holmes and George Cokayn (the writer of the “Book of Prodigies,” who is now writing a Chronicle), both preachers, have weekly meetings at an alehouse in Ivy Lane; and if their studies were searched, papers of consequence might be found. This document is endorsed with a note by Sir E. Nicholas, which proves that action was taken upon the information, but of what character does not appear. Cokayn was probably sum-

* *State Papers*, “Domestic,” Charles II., vol. xliii., No. 130.

moned to appear before the Secretary of State, and then he made short work of the information. He denied either having anything to do with a "Book of Prodigies" or with a Chronicle. Possibly he worked in that strange life-text of his; and the endorsement on the information adds that Cokayn had permission, although not in orders, to preach in Dr. Hall's church.

The reference to a "Book of Prodigies" was connected with the appearance of heavenly phenomena, which created a serious effect in the minds of the vulgar, and were generally regarded as betokening evil to the king. On the 8th of December Cokayn was again mentioned in an information sworn to by one Mr. Jessey, who actually affirmed that he had been in the habit of visiting Cokayn, and had not only written out Prodigies for him, but had heard Cokayn relate some. Nothing came of this statement at that time.

These are the only facts relating to Cokayn which appear in the State Papers for 1661. They prove that at that time he was in London, and subsequent references show that he continued to reside for a considerable time after his severance from Pancras in the minister's house, Soper Lane. There was plenty of work for him at that period amongst the members of his congregation. Mrs. Tichborne was one of the chief objects of his solicitude, and at her house he must have been a welcome visitor. As soon as her unfortunate husband became a prisoner, officers were despatched to Noble Street for the purpose of carrying away his plate and other property. What was obtained is not mentioned, but from the number of claimants for a share in his property, it must have been considerable.

One Katherine, wife of Paul Feryn, a groom of the robes to the king, received as a jointure on her marriage, a debt of £2000

due from Charles I., for perfumery, to her father-in-law; and she petitioned for "the lease forfeited by attainder of Alderman Tichborne, of Old Court Manor, part of the demesne of East Greenwich, with parsonage, ballast wharf, &c., on rent of £6 13s. 4d., in lieu of"* the debt. In March, 1661, a grant was made "to Sir Henry Littleton, Bart., of £1,500 now in the East India Company, and other moneys and stock of Robert Tichborne, attainted of high treason."† His wealth was in this manner distributed at the whim of the king, but probably his family was allowed to retain a portion; and towards Anne Tichborne, his wife, the king appears to have acted with much consideration. After having been confined for a period in the Tower, where his wife had reasonable access to him, he was removed

* *State Papers*, "Charles II.," vol. xx., No. 103.

† *Ibid.*, "Charles II.," vol. xxxiii.

to a fortress on Holy Island, one of the Scilly Isles. Here the change of climate, absence of all friends, and possibly an increased rigour in the character of his imprisonment, brought on an illness. His wife received intelligence of his condition, and in January, 1663, petitioned the king for leave to send a servant to her husband, who was then lame and infirm.* There was no delay in the response, for in the latter part of the same month a dispatch was sent to Lord Widdrington, Governor of Holy Island, announcing that the king had consented to allow a servant to wait upon Tichborne in prison; but the governor was cautioned to take care that "his Majesty's service was not prejudiced thereby." From this servant Mrs. Tichborne received communications concerning her husband, whose illness continued to be of a serious charac-

* *State Papers*, "Charles II.," vol. lxxvi, No. 96.

ter. Her former success with the king emboldened her, as she next petitioned for the removal of her husband to some nearer place. This was in 1663, and permission was granted for his return home; but some matters of state intervened, and in October of the same year Mrs. Tichborne jogged the memory of the Secretary of State, and urged her suit more vehemently, on the ground that her husband's illness had assumed dangerous proportions.* The necessary warrants were not made out that winter, and on March 4, 1664, Mrs. Tichborne petitioned again, in a tone of entreaty, "for the removal of her husband to some nearer place, he being weak and ill, and she unable, on account of the distance, to administer the help necessary for preservation of his life." Five days afterwards the necessary documents were signed and despatched: one

* *State Papers*, "Charles II."

to Sir Robert Collingwood, Governor of Holy Island, to deliver up, and the other to John Strode, Lieutenant of Dover Castle, to receive, Robert Tichborne. The heroic woman went to Dover to visit her husband, who returned much shattered in health. From Dover she petitioned once more, and for the last time, so far as the State Papers show. The following is the text of her petition :—

“To the King’s Most Excellent Majesty.
—The humble petition of Anne Tichborne, wife of Robert Tichborne, now prisoner in Dover Castle, humbly sheweth that your petitioner doth with all thankfulness acknowledge your Majesty’s grace and favour in the removal of her husband from Holy Island to Dover ; and though his condition be much bettered thereby, yet his weaknesses and distempers of body that have long been upon him, do necessitate your petitioner to

desire your Majesty's further favour. Your petitioner therefore humbly prays that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to grant leave to your petitioner, with two of her children and a maid-servant, to remain in the Castle with her husband, that she may be helpful to him in his necessitous condition. And your petitioner shall ever pray, &c.

“ANNE TICHBORNE.”*

The requisite permission was granted — none of her requests were refused — and Lieutenant Strode was directed to permit Anne Tichborne, with her two children and maid-servant, to see her husband, “and if she please to remain shut up with him in prison.” By the loving care of his wife he recovered from that illness. From 1664 until 1679, a period of fifteen years, Tichborne remained in Dover Castle, and then

* *State Papers*, March, 1664.

he was removed to the Tower of London. This was probably in consequence of the intercession of his devoted wife. When in the Tower, he was more accessible to his friends, and being a State-prisoner, he enjoyed many privileges. His name appears amongst the list of prisoners for the* Lady-day quarter, 1679, and amongst his companions were Lord Powis, Lord Stafford, Lord Peters, Lord Bellesize, Lord Arundell, and Lord Castlemaine, Sir Henry Tichborne, Messrs. John Carrell, Hooper, sen., Hooper, jun., and Ratcliffe. Other noble lords, and prisoners of less degree, passed out and in, through the historic gates, while he was there; amongst others poor Stephen Colledge, to his sham trial and execution at Oxford, and the Earl of Shaftesbury was for a time prisoned there. Tichborne was allowed £3 13s. 4d. per week, a large

* Tower Records.

sum in those days. How his time was spent we may speculate upon, but shall never rightly know. He who faced his fate with calmness and resolution, fearing his conscience more than a prison, was not likely to grow rebellious, though the years were stretched out. Thoughts of home, of wife, of children, of friends; their freedom and sorrow, and his restraint, must have sorely tried his heart. In the open squares in which he exercised, he was probably permitted to talk with fellow-prisoners, whose lot was more unfortunate than his own. From his grated chamber he caught glimpses of the country beyond the river, or the fields between the Tower and the City. Then on visiting days it must have been a solace to see his faithful wife and children,* or

* Mrs. Priscilla Sharp, a granddaughter of Sir Robert Tichborne, was a member of the Independent Congregation worshipping in Back Street, Horsleydown, in 1764. The celebrated John Wilkes was also a descendant of his.

talk with his friends. Nineteen years he spent in prison before he was brought to the Tower, and after three years' more imprisonment he received that acquittance which King Charles never bestowed. In the Michaelmas quarter of 1682, this entry appears in the Tower Records :

“For safe keeping Mr. Robert Tichborne from and for the 25th day of June, 1682, ending, and for the 27th day of the month of June, being three days, at £3 per week ancient allowance, and 13s. 4d. present demands according to retrenchment . . . 5s. 8½d.”

Close by that piece of grass which was once watered by the blood of an English queen, stands the Tower church, or, as it is more correctly called, the Royal chapel, dedicated to St. Peter ad Vincula. In the register of this church, under date July 6, 1682, appears these words : “—— Tichborne, Alderman of London.” This is the brief record

of the death and burial of Sir Robert Tichborne, one of the judges of Charles I., afterwards Lord Mayor of London, and one of George Cokayn's friends.

CHAPTER VII.

John Ireton—Reference in Pepys—Ireton in the Tower—His Illness—Removed to the Scilly Isles—Release—Reported a dangerous Fanatic in 1664—Judgments obtained against him by the King—Cokayn's Preaching Stations—The Act of Uniformity—Effect produced—Informers appointed in Large Towns—Third Information against Cokayn in 1662—Uniformity of Religion secured—Sermons from behind Prison Bars—Emptiness of the City Churches—A Clerical mistake at St. Paul's—Wilson undertakes a Voyage—Is apprehended and lodged in Deal Castle—Released and proceeds to New England—In Custody again in 1665—Petitions, and is set at Liberty.

ANOTHER family to whom Cokayn was a valued adviser, was that of Sir John Ireton. That title, conferred upon him by Cromwell, was never used after the Restoration. Pepys, in his "Diary," under date December 1, 1661, mentions Ireton's arrest. He says, "There hath lately been great clapping-up of some old statesmen, such as Ireton . . .

and others, as they say upon a great plot; but I believe no such thing; but it is but justice that they should be served as they served the poor Cavaliers; and I believe it will oftentimes be so as long as they live, whether there be cause or no."

The next references to Ireton are in the State Papers, and they furnish the only remaining facts that probably exist respecting him. He was convicted of a charge brought against him, and received a sentence of imprisonment. In February, 1662,* Alvaney Pinckney, gentleman-porter of the Tower, reported that the indisposition of Alderman Ireton was such that he desired a warrant to see his wife and a medical man. The requisite permission was granted, and Mrs. Ireton, Dr. Cox, and a nurse, were allowed to have access to him, in presence of the keeper, during his indisposition. From

* *State Papers*, "Charles II.," vol. iv., No. 19.

that illness he recovered; and in the summer was transported, together with Major John Wildman, a prisoner charged with treason, to the Scilly Isles. The change was one which they both disapproved, according to Sir Francis Godolphin, who visited the Isles in August. He reported that Sir Arthur Bassett governed the garrison well; but the two prisoners there, Wildman and Ireton, disliked their change from the Tower, but pretended ignorance of the charges made against them, and were in expectation of receiving their discharge.* Alderman Ireton was set at liberty, and returned to the neighbourhood of London, where, in 1664, he was reported as one of thirteen dangerous fanatics residing at East Sheen. One or more judgments were afterwards obtained against him in 1665, respecting plate and jewellery claimed on behalf of the king. Before this question was

* *State Papers*, "Charles II.," vol. iv., No. 42.

finally settled, a warrant was issued against him for dangerous and seditious practices, but he evaded capture ; and in June, 1666, a settlement was made with respect to the claim on behalf of the Crown. From that time he passed into oblivion ; but, in the glimpses obtained of him, there is sufficient to show that he occupied a distinguished position in his day, and acted his part from a conscientious conviction, for which he suffered much persecution.

Apart from the demands made upon Cokayn by the distressing circumstances in which the families of Tichborne and Ireton were placed, he was constantly engaged in preaching ; and, from the informations sworn against him, proof is furnished that his fame and his zeal suffered no deterioration after his ejection. He preached in the houses of many City men. Occasionally he went into Bedfordshire ; and, while there, he preached in a village near his native place. In London he held services in the

house of Mr. Blake, a magistrate who resided in Covent Garden, and in the residence of Jacob Willett, in St. Laurence Lane. While he remained in Soper Lane, religious services were constantly held by him ; and, after the Restoration, spies watched his door to note who went in and out. William Pendlebury and Henry Lyte were both constant friends of his, and in their houses no doubt he occasionally preached. John Moore was another at whose residence he probably held religious services. One more remains to be mentioned—Chilton Lodge, Hungerford—the country retreat of Sir Bulstrode White-locke. There Cokayn was a frequent visitor, and was always sure of a hearty welcome—not only by Sir Bulstrode, but also by Mary his wife, and the members of his family. In all these houses there were spacious rooms in which a large number of people could meet with comfort ; and after the Act of Uni-

formity and the Five-Mile Act were passed, the owners ran less risk of detection than would happen in the case of poorer people.

In 1662 the Act of Uniformity was passed, and Bartholomew's-day was chosen as that on which the Act was to come in force. For several weeks preceding the appointed time, farewell sermons were preached by the Nonconforming ministers to their congregations. There was extraordinary excitement created throughout the whole country; and when the day arrived, more than two thousand pulpits lacked occupants. Suitable men could not be found to fill all the vacant pulpits; so that eminent Conformists were allowed to hold more than one living; and in many towns the Nonconformists continued to hold religious services in the church. This was the case at Yarmouth, where thousands of Independents met in direct opposition to the Act, until Sir Thomas Meddows "put them

by and locked the doors.”* The amount of suffering entailed upon the ministers and their families can hardly be appreciated; yet not one of them fell into difficulties and debt. This fact is as creditable to them as it is to the people in whose midst they laboured. They settled down in the places where they had been accustomed to minister; and where friends proved unable to keep them, they performed manual labour during the week and preached upon the Sunday. Bishops commenced visitations in their respective dioceses, and it can hardly be matter of rebuke towards them, that many of the new clergy turned out to be godless men. This Act shook the foundations of civil life, and gave birth to a feeling of terror which filled the king and his advisers with alarm. From all parts of the country reports were forwarded to the Secretary of State of rumoured

* *State Papers*, Dec. 14, 1668.

risings; of the meetings of Nonconformists in large bodies; and magistrates filled the gaols with the godly of all denominations. Spies began to multiply, and a system for obtaining secret information was propagated. Many holding office under Government, in the army, or on the bench, became informers; and tradesmen were selected in certain districts to send information regularly to Court. At the close of 1662, Cokayn was again mentioned in an information sent to Sir Henry Bennet, who succeeded Sir Edward Nicholas as Secretary of State. This was the third occasion on which he was reported. It was in connection with John Caitness, whom the Government was anxious to capture. Robert Johnston, an informer, in describing the friends of Caitness, enumerated Mr. Kiffin, Cokayn, a minister, and Cornet Billing, a Quaker. He said, "This Cokayn and Kiffin are two witty-subtled, close-plodding men. I

know not where Cokayn lives. There is a courtier was one of his Church-members, but it may be he will not own it now. If he can tell where he lives, I know not." Mr. Kiffin was a distinguished Baptist merchant; Cornet Billing was a very eccentric man, even for a Quaker; and Pepys relates several characteristic stories about him. The Church received a shock at that time from which she never recovered; and the persecutions which succeeded only served to widen the breach between her and the working-people of England. Uniformity of religion was secured, but after a manner never anticipated. Men and women of every religious denomination met in the gaols, and there worshipped in common. From the streets people looked between iron rails into the wards of the prison, and upon Sunday the prisoners preached in turn to crowds of people, who blocked up the thoroughfares,

while in the intervals of speech they sang the Psalms of David. Upon one occasion a magistrate dispersed the crowd with the aid of soldiers. Such was the only uniformity wrought by the Act.

In 1663 the emptiness of all the City churches was matter of common observation. Pepys mentions that upon the anniversary of the king's coronation, he called at several churches. In some there were hardly ten persons, and they were poor people. The Book of Common Prayer had then taken its accustomed place in the exercise of worship; but the people had forgotten the responses; and the clergy themselves were exposed to the satire of the people, for mistakes which it was alleged they made concerning the sacred name of Jesus. There is a ballad in the British Museum which recounts a clerical misadventure in St. Paul's on November the 5th. Two of the verses are as follow:

" But the good doctor, when he came before you
The sacred Gospel to read,
At Judas his name (O horrible shame !)
He bowed his reverend head.

" Some say that his sight (poor man) is not right,
I wish that it be no worse ;
But others think he to Judas bow'd the knee
For love he bears to the purse."

Towards the close of 1663 Samuel Wilson fell into serious trouble. The disorders in the City induced him to remove to East Greenwich, from whence he was rowed up to St. Katharine's Wharf every day in his barge. Following upon the ejectment of the ministers, trade became disordered. Merchants lost confidence, and many small traders were ruined at this period. Wilson undertook a voyage to New England, for the purpose of trade ; and also with a view to see how the Puritans were getting on in their new transatlantic home. He carried with him goods valued at £1,500 ; and when in the Downs the ship was boarded by the

king's officers, who discovered a seditious letter wrapped up in a bundle of books, and directed to a New England Puritan. For this offence the vessel was stopped, and Wilson carried a prisoner to Deal Castle.* The letter is one that has been often quoted as containing a description of the state of affairs in England. It was written by a well-known minister, William Hooke, but to whom it was addressed is not known. After remaining in custody for a short time Wilson was released, upon giving a bond for his future good conduct. He was absent from April, 1663, until some time in the autumn of 1665; and his visit to New England must have been a source of great satisfaction to himself and also to those he visited. During his absence a complaint was made against him to the king by a company of merchants trading with the Canary Isles, with whom

* *State Papers*, 1663.

Wilson had refused to enter into partnership, because they wanted a larger share of the trading profits than he was willing to concede, he having previously established a trade there. The inhabitants preferred trading with Wilson; and the company's factors interfering, a riot ensued. Upon the complaint reaching the king, a warrant was at once issued against Wilson, which was executed in November, 1665. He had no opportunity of defending himself from the accusation; and, without any examination, was kept in custody three weeks. Then he petitioned for release, urging that his affairs required him much at the vintage time; and any further imprisonment would result in a serious loss of revenue to the king. This petition produced the desired result, and he was released at the latter end of November.

CHAPTER VIII.

George Cokayn goes into Bedfordshire—Preaches in his Son's House—Fourth Information against him, dated Jan., 1664—The Sermons and the Prayers—Distance of Cardington from Bedford—Cokayn and Bunyan—Outbreak of the Plague—Apprehension of Cokayn—Is bailed by two Friends in March, 1664—Remains in London during the Plague—The new Clergy forsake their Congregations—Ejected Ministers return—Cokayn preaches to the Nobility—Names of some of his Hearers—Fifth Information against him in August—The Informer—Sum raised in Aid of the Godly.

AN information, which furnishes very much material towards a clear conception of George Cokayn's energy and devotedness, is furnished by a State Paper dated January 23, 1664, which we shall now give at length.

“The information of Matthew Morgan, of Carrington, in the county of Bedford, yeoman, taken upon oath this 23rd day of January,

in the fifteenth year of the reign of our now sovereign lord, King Charles the Second, before Sir George Blundell, knight, one of his majesty's justices of the peace of the county of Bedford.

“This informant saith, that upon a Sunday, in the evening, after sunset, about a fortnight before Michaelmas last, that George Cokayn, of Soper Lane, London, was then preaching in Mr. John Cokayn's house in Carrington, aforesaid, where this informant then was, and did then in his sermons say that he had read that the sun shone so hot upon some people that they went out with their bows and arrows to shoot against [it]; and so the Government now shot against the people of God because they preached the Gospel freely. And that there was then present twenty persons at the least. And this informant further saith that this informant did then, and several other times, hear the said George

Cokayn, in his prayer, pray that God would be pleased to deliver the people that were in prison in this nation, for the Gospel-sake, out of the hands of wicked and unreasonable men, and to break open the prison doors.

“This informant further saith, that in or about the month of May last, the said George Cokayn, then being at the said John Cokayn’s house, he, the informant, did then hear the said Cokayn say in his discourse with others of the family, that the old king did deserve to be beheaded, and why should he not be beheaded as well as another ?

“This informant likewise saith, that he, the said informant, several times in summer last heard the said George Cokayn both pray and preach against the government of this nation in the presence and hearing of several persons.”

That last sentence was put in for the special object of getting Cokayn into trouble ;

and there is reason to believe that it produced the desired effect. There is much significance in the constant repetition of the prayer for the deliverance of the godly who were in prisons.

Cardington, or Carrington, is two miles from Bedford, and at that time, one John Bunyan was in prison in the gaol of that town. Cople is only one mile from Cardington. George Cokayn was on a visit home. His fame as a preacher was widespread. Old friends urged him to preach; and his country friends flocked to hear him, in companies of twenty at a time. Bedford was only a short walk from Cople. The imprisonment of the tinker was doubtless talked about amongst the fanatics. It is not improbable, therefore, that Cokayn visited Bunyan at that time in his prison, and told him about the progress of God's work, and the effect of man's malice in the great metropolis.

During the latter part of 1663 there were rumours current of an outbreak of plague abroad, and, in the spring of 1664, it appeared in London.

Cokayn returned to town soon after Morgan's information was received at Court, and he was almost immediately apprehended. The exact circumstances attending his arrest are not at all clear. He may have been captured on account of the statement made by Morgan, or it may have happened that in some general seizure of suspected people, he was included amongst a number of others. Nor is it possible to ascertain accurately the course which was pursued with regard to him, the gaol in which he was confined, or the circumstances under which he obtained his freedom. In all probability he was thrown into Newgate, and from thence taken before a bench of justices by whom he was released on bail. The bond into which he

entered is now in the State Paper Office, and furnishes the only clue to this episode in his life. The body of it is in Latin ; and it briefly sets forth that two merchants of London, William Pendlebury and Henry Lyte, had entered into a bond of £200, that George Cokayn should surrender himself during the ensuing six months before the King or Council, within ten days of receiving a summons, to answer such things as might be objected against him. The bond is dated March 1, and the signature "George Cokayn," is the only handwriting of his that now exists. There is nothing whatever in the State Papers to show that the summons was ever served upon Cokayn within the prescribed time ; but there is undoubted evidence that he remained in London until the latter end of October ; and was during the whole of that time very busily engaged in ministerial work. The violence of the plague may have diverted the attention

of the authorities from any further examination or prosecution of Cokayn ; and he went on resolutely with God's work amongst the poor terror-stricken people of London, just as though he had no fear of standing before either the king or his council. The plague wrought fearful havoc amongst the poor. Trade was suspended, and provisions became difficult to obtain. In July the king fled from the City. The majority of the newly-appointed clergy also fled ; then the old ejected ministers returned, and preached to crowded congregations. Nor was it amongst the poor solely that Cokayn laboured at that time, as the next information relating to him sets him forth in noble company. But his object was not merely to comfort them with the word of God, but to draw from them the help which many godly people at that period stood in need of.

On August 5 there was an assemblage in the house of Mr. Blake, an ex-justice of the

peace, in Covent Garden. He was probably removed from the bench because of his having refused to convict some godly fanatic ; but he did not lose his position in society by this degradation. In his house, in a wainscoted room, dimly illuminated by diamond-shaped glass panes, a congregation of about two hundred met to worship God.* Amongst those present were the Countess of Valentia, the Countess of Peterborough, the Countess of Anglesey, the two Lady Ermyns, and four or five knights, whose names the informer could not obtain. Mr. Blake offered prayer. No mention is made of singing. They may have omitted that portion of divine worship, in consequence of the Conventicle Act, fearing that the sound of sacred harmony might bring in some informers, little thinking that there was one in their midst all the time. After prayer George Cokayn

* *State Papers.* Vol. ci., No. 102.

preached. What a grand occasion was that for him. In the heart of a plague-stricken district, in the streets of which men and women often lay dead until the plague-carts came by to collect the victims ; when terror was upon the countenance of every one, and people called in wild fear upon the name of the Lord ; at such a time George Cokayn preached a sermon to two hundred of the "quality ;" and though we do not know his text, we may be sure it was an eloquent exposition of those rules which he had laid down years before, of duty to man, and walking to Christ. The informer described Cokayn as "a Fifth-Monarchy man." This was his gross interpretation of a glorious sermon, in the course of which Cokayn told his hearers that God had indeed come, in the judgment of the plague, and that they must all be prepared to meet Him. The miscreant who wrote that information was a man em-

ployed by some poor Nonconformists to obtain for them money out of a fund which had been raised for the relief of the godly of all persuasions. The same information states that £1,000 had been raised for that purpose, which was then an enormous amount. The man also mentioned that several meetings were held on the same day. In this way God's cause prospered, in spite of the Conventicle Act and the plague.

CHAPTER IX.

Sixth Information against Cokayn in October, 1664—The Five-Mile Act—Agitation in England—Seventh Information against Cokayn in September, 1666—The Great Fire of London—Pancras Church burnt—The old Churchyard—John Moore becomes Sheriff of London—Suspension of the Conventicle and Five-Mile Acts—Houses Licensed for Divine Worship—Sir Bulstrode and Cokayn apply for Licences—Three Applications on one Sheet—Scene in Chilton Lodge—Cokayn's House in Redcross Street—The State Spy-book—Famous Preachers, Neighbours of Cokayn—Their System of Worship—A Gap of Sixteen Years—Persecution and Executions in Scotland—Itinerants and Wanderers.

TWO months elapsed, and Cokayn appears once more, as earnest in his great work as ever, and as certain to be misinterpreted by the informer in some way or other as before. The intelligence which was sent to the Secretary of State referred to a movement for the purpose of uniting

such Presbyterians as had been ejected with the Independents. Persecution had made brethren of these two great separatist sections. Ultimately nothing came of the movement, beyond the interchange of brotherly kindnesses; but that was a great deal to accomplish in those days. The declaration sets forth that there had been a meeting of Fifth-Monarchists, with those of Cokayn's church, at Cokayn's house, Soper Lane, on the 26th of October. That glorious dream of his was altogether beyond the comprehension of a spy, who could conceive of no reign except that of physical force, with informers, soldiers, turnkeys, and executioners. Nothing came of this accusation, so far as the State Papers show; and a whole year elapsed before his name was mentioned again. The plague continued its ravages throughout 1665; and finally disappeared at the great fire which broke out

in September, 1666. In the meantime, further measures were passed to crush Nonconformity. The continual reports of conventicles held in all parts of the kingdom, coupled with the lying representations that the frequenters of them were always plotting against the king, caused measures of the utmost severity to be passed. That Act known as the Oxford authorised the administration of an oath of passive obedience and non-resistance; and if that was refused, then the nonjurors were forbidden to live within five miles of any corporation which sent members to Parliament. Nor was that the full measure of severity which was meted out to the tender-conscienced people of that day. To strengthen the provisions of the Conventicle Act, ministers were ultimately deprived of the right of trial by jury; and every justice was empowered to convict them upon the oath of a single informer. In the

beginning of 1666, the plague had so far abated that the king and court returned to London; and gradually the people resumed their customary occupations. But fresh troubles were imminent then, in several parts of the kingdom; and the spies fostered the feeling that the unfortunate Nonconformists were plotting against the peace of the king. There were emissaries sent into Holland, to discover what was going on amongst those English living there, who preferred exile and freedom in their worship of God, to home and a fettered conscience. On the 25th of September, a letter was sent from Rotterdam giving an account of doings of the English there; and reference was made to Cokayn. The writer says, "a watch should be kept on Mr. Cokayn, formerly Whitelocke's chaplain; he corresponds with Lockier, the minister, now privately at Rotterdam." This was the seventh information

relating to him sent to the authorities; and each one was from a different source.

Although no record exists of any act of Cokayn's during 1666; from what we know he did in 1664, it is hardly likely that he would remain indolent. The people flocked out of London, and swarmed about the villages of Islington, Highbury, and Newington; and in the green fields that stretched right away to Highgate. Wherever there was a congregation to be found, thither George Cokayn went; and there was ample scope for his ministrations amongst the burnt-out inhabitants of the great city. Two such terrible visitations as the plague and the fire, caused a cessation of severities practised upon the Fanatics; and the first to return to the City were the ejected men, many of whom built wooden sheds on the sites of their former churches, and preached to large congregations. At the same time,

by order of the Bishop of London, several conventicles in the neighbourhood of Red-cross Street were forcibly taken possession of, in order that the clergy might have a temporary place in which to preach. A small space of grass, and a few ruinous tombs, now mark the position of the old graveyard of Pancras; and warehouses cover the site of the once celebrated church.

Gradually the impression produced by the plague and the fire wore off; and the persecution of the saints revived. The king was continually talking of granting more indulgence to the sectaries, and his Commons, with the bishops, invariably interposed to prevent it. Yet the king never suffered the obnoxious Acts to have their fullest scope; and high officials from all parts of the king-

NOTE.—The house of Alderman Tichborne, a timber building in Noble Street, was one of the few houses which escaped the fire. All the houses round it were consumed.

dom constantly wrote, complaining that they did not know how to act against conventicles, or under what statute to prosecute preachers.

In 1671, John Moore was elected Sheriff of London; and to his influence Cokayn probably owed that immunity from serious molestation which characterised his subsequent life. The spies and informers were afraid to interfere with one who was allied with so important a public functionary as the Sheriff. How far Moore identified himself with the Nonconformists can only be conjectured; but his influence was considerable, and Cokayn never was treated with such harshness as many other City ministers.

In March, 1672, during a Parliamentary recess, Charles II. suspended the Conventicle and the Five-Mile Acts, and licensed preachers and preaching-places. There are seven or eight hundred applications in a bundle preserved amongst the State Papers;

and many well-known names appear. Amongst the places for which licences were required, upper rooms, barns, malting floors, garden houses, buildings in orchards, halls belonging to public companies, chambers in ruined monasteries, cellars in old castles, were named. Every Nonconformist minister applied for a licence for his own house. Philip Henry wrote from Malpas for permission to hold divine service in his house. John Bunyan applied to have a house in an orchard, belonging to Josiah Roughhed, at Bedford, licensed in which to preach. On one particular sheet of paper are the following applications :

- “ Mr. James Pearson, of the Congregational persuasion, at the house of Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke, at Chilton Lodge, Wiltshire.
- “ [Congregational.] Mr. John Whitman, at the house of Mr. George Cokayn, at Cotton End, in the parish of Cardington, in Bedfordshire.
- “ [Congregational.] Mr. George Cokayn, at his own house in Redcross Street, London.
- “ Pray deliver these to Nath. Ponder.”

This is conclusive evidence that the relation between Cokayn and Sir Bulstrode was still as close as before. In his retirement, it is pleasant to think he was visited by his former chaplain. There were several others in the household who would give him a hearty welcome, and his visits would undoubtedly be commemorated by a sermon. In one of those handsome old halls, which the painters love to represent, with oakened floor and wainscoted walls adorned with suits of armour, and windows looking out upon pleasant meadows, or gardens full of fragrant flowers, the household was gathered together. First we recognise sweet Mary Wilson Whitelocke, looking much more matronly than when she sat in the old church at Soper Lane; but with love undiminished, and faith unchanged. The grave Sir Bulstrode, then fast approaching the end of his pilgrimage, bore deeply chiselled lines on his brow. On many occa-

sions Cokayn was accompanied by his wife, that lady who is all shadow to us, so wonderfully did her life grow into, and become absorbed by his; but though we may not see her face and hear her words, we are sure she was a partaker of his faith, and bade him, if his spirit ever did droop, take courage in the name of the Lord. On some of these visits they probably met Mrs. Samuel Wilson, who always had a long story to tell of the annoyances and persecutions to which her brave husband was subjected. And as occasion served Samuel Wilson would accompany his wife, and the family circle, such as it has been presented to us, would then be complete. After divine service what consultations would take place about the hope of toleration, or the danger of sudden risings! What strange stories they had to tell each other of personal experiences, or of the godly who suffered! We picture the old hall, built up

more than half timber, with quaint gables, adorned with curiously carved figures, the windows stretching the whole width of the front walls, shaded by climbing plants or screened by trees, and gardens full of pleasant flowers that distilled sweet odour throughout all the chambers of the house. As the Lodge stood on an eminence, the residents and their visitors had magnificent views of the surrounding country, sweet woodland glades on one hand, far-reaching woods on another.

How pleasant it must have been to George Cokayn, at intervals, to have Chilton Lodge as a refuge from the turmoil and sorrow of his London work, to wander under the shady trees of the park, with Sir Bulstrode and Mary Whitelocke, and talk with them of that coming time when men and women would no longer be cast into prison for worshipping God according to the dictates of conscience.

The application for a licence at Cardington shows that George Cokayn was a regular visitor at his son's house down to 1672; and probably onwards from that time for many years.

But our attention is specially attracted to the house in Redcross Street, where he was then living. From Pancras, the congregation removed to their minister's dwelling. Besides certain houses in which he preached, there was this great central preaching station where poor and rich alike were always welcomed. This was a famous locality for preachers in those days. There were many "fair houses," as Stow terms them, standing in their own plots of ground, which afforded admirable arrangements for accommodating large congregations. These houses, at one time, were used as country mansions by rich citizens; and in still older times, religious houses were established there. Green fields and country lanes

stretched from Redcross Street to Bunhill. The Moorfields only boasted of few houses ; pleasure gardens, fruit orchards, and pasture land extending from Aldersgate northwards. The Jews' burial-place was turned into a garden before Cokayn went to reside in Redcross Street. From his house a *green lane, bordered with trees, ran down between garden-ground into Aldersgate Street ; and the Abbot of Ramsey had in former times a great house in that street. Amongst the State records is a Spy-book, which contains a list of the names and a description of the places where many of the Nonconforming preachers lived. From this, and another list of a later date, which is at Lambeth Palace library, we learn the names of Cokayn's neighbours. William Kiffin, the celebrated merchant preacher, lived near the Artillery Ground ; Thomas Gouge, next door to the

* Now called Paul's Alley.

Windmill, against St. Sepulchre's; Mr. Grimes, in Horne Alley, Aldersgate Street; Thomas Vincent, a bold, brave preacher, in Hand Alley, Bishopsgate Street; Thomas Watson, who was ejected from Stephen's, Walbrook, in Devonshire House, Bishopsgate Street; Dr. John Owen, "the prince of Divines," in White's Alley, Moorfields; Daniel Dyke, the Baptist, at the Artillery Ground; Mr. Powell, described as, "a very factious man," in Cherry Tree Alley, Bunhill; Dr. Annesley, in Spittle Fields; Philip Nye, and John Loder, both Independents, in Cherry Tree Alley, Bunhill; Dr. Goodwin, a learned Independent, somewhere near Bunhill. There was no district of London which was so thickly occupied by Conventicles as Redcross Street, Paul's Alley, Meeting-House Alley, Barbican, the Artillery Ground, and Bunhill lanes. In several cases the informer mentions that the residence of the minister

was near where the quarters of some unfortunate man hung in the open air. To the houses of these godly men, in the country lanes and fields outside the City walls, fugitive ministers from different parts of the country came, when persecution drove them from home, to seek elsewhere a shelter. The ministers so arranged their meetings that one was held somewhere every night in the week, and several upon each Sunday. Often their religious services were prolonged far into the night; and a minister frequently preached in two or three different houses, many miles apart, between dusk and dawn. A settled congregation regularly attended the services in George Cokayn's house from 1672; and from this the present congregation is directly descended. There was probably a room in the house capable of holding a large number of people. Such a chamber as may occasionally be seen in old country houses, in

the neighbourhood of London now. From the isolated position of the dwelling, partially hidden by trees and separated from the neighbouring highways by gardens, the congregation would enjoy immunity from the hateful spy; and the hanging of tapestry, or the more modest cloth, about the walls, would tend to deaden the sound of the human voice, to all outside the charmed circle.

From 1672 to 1688, a period of sixteen years, our utmost endeavours have failed to find a trace of Cokayn.

In the whole period of his life this is the longest gap which exists in our present actual knowledge. Enough is known to justify the inference that he was actively employed during the whole time in the work of the Church; preaching at certain fixed stations, as well as in Redcross Street; visiting and holding meetings with his brethren; occasionally in the prison yards of

the Marshalsea, the Gate-house, or Newgate, comforting the prisoners, and keeping up a constant correspondence with godly ministers abroad. A little thought will enable us to apprehend how full of work his hands must have been.

In the political history of England the years which linked 1672 with 1688 were characterised by a series of incidents of an unparalleled description. When the spies and informers found that the persecution of godly Dissenters was not acceptable at Court, they followed the popular cry against Popery, and hunted Papists. Gaols that had echoed with the psalms of David, sung by Independents, Baptists, and Presbyterians, were soon filled with the most distinguished Roman Catholics. They were regarded with disfavour by all sections of Christians. England had suffered so much from the Papacy that many godly men preferred restraint, rather

than allow to the Romanists any liberty. During the prevalence of this Anti-Popish feeling, the party jealousy between Whigs and Tories became also much embittered. The State Papers for several years are filled with silly stories from all parts of England respecting Popish plots and Whig or Tory disturbances. The animosity against the Roman Catholics reached a climax in the infamous persecutions which Titus Oates was instrumental in causing; and many innocent men were brought to the scaffold. In the City much alarm was constantly felt, and the train-bands were frequently kept under arms all night. At this time five lords were cast into the Tower; one of them, the aged Lord Stafford, to pass out again quickly to suffer a cruel death. In Scotland the persecution of the godly drove them to arms, and the Covenanters covered their faith with glory, by the heroic bravery they displayed

upon the battle-field. The best blood of the country was poured out as a sacrifice to liberty of conscience; and those who escaped death upon the field met their fate with heroism upon the scaffold. A State Paper despatched from Edinburgh in the beginning of December reports the execution of a number of the prisoners, who laid their blood at the door of the prelates, which expression "had too great dipping in the hearts of the commonalty." In another letter, dated December 7, the correspondent gives an account of the execution of ten men at Edinburgh. One Arnot, in the name of the rest, uttered a prayer: then drawing forth a bottle of sack, with "a roaring voice declared he would drink no more wine till he drank it new in his Father's kingdom. And then," adds the writer, "most comically turned himself off." A cause for which men die in that manner is one that must ultimately become triumphant.

England had only just completed a fresh peace with Holland; and the silly fear about Papists wrought more devastation than the war. The Duke of York, vexed at his impeachment on account of Papistical leanings, took part with the clergy against the Dissenters, and the most eminent men were again subjected to bitter persecution. At this time the City was moved to protect the persecuted Nonconformists, more in opposition to the Court than in sympathy with the principles of those whom they befriended. To punish the City the king issued a *quo warranto* to inquire into their privileges; and in carrying out his purpose it will be seen that he found in Sir John Moore a willing tool. The execution of Russell and Sidney was followed by a period of quietness; but it was only the lull that preceded the tempest. In the flower of his life, the victim of his passions, died Charles II., and the storm quickly burst forth.

James II. took the helm of affairs into his own hands, and prerogative soon came to an end. But before his course was run, the Dissenters suffered fearful persecution, under the direction of the brutal Jeffreys. The mock trial of Richard Baxter, in May, 1685, and his imprisonment until the close of 1686, are familiar to all. A much more fearful atrocity was perpetrated in the beheading of Alice Lisle, and the burning of Elizabeth Gaunt, and with those events the end of James and Jeffreys came.

When the facts of which this is a brief summary are borne in mind, it will be evident that the life of George Cokayn, during those years must have been full of peril and excitement. He did not relax his zeal, or his Church could not have attained the proportions it did, at the time of his death. The Dissenting preachers are styled in the records of Lambeth Palace "itinerants" and "wan-

derers;" and this serves to show their chief characteristics. They itinerated throughout the country preaching to congregations; and by only stopping a short time in one place they eluded the spies who were unable to obtain their correct names before they went away. They became "wanderers," when, to escape from warrants, they fled to London, and remained in hiding until search after them slackened. Complaint was frequently made that the preachers' houses outside the City walls were full of strangers in the guise of fanatics, who had come from the country. The high steeple hats and short cloaks worn by the Puritans made them readily identified. To these men the house of Cokayn was always open, and food and shelter were never refused. What a striking contrast does the state of those times present to that which exists now! When the congregation met, with what a sad heart would George Cokayn

note the absence of some regular attendant, who had been suddenly cast into Newgate. How often would his mind be pained by stories of new levies made in the shape of fines upon some poor godly family who had thereby been ruined. The life of the Church was full of anxiety and suffering, and her earnestness was only thereby increased. Sometimes meetings were held at night at which two or three continued in prayer for several hours; and only parted when the dawn of day warned them that the spies would be quickly about the streets. Yet it is to the godly of those times we owe the brightest colouring of our English home life. The rule of Philip Henry's house was that of thousands of others. He catechised the members of his household in the principles of divine religion; he questioned them upon the sermons they heard; they sang a hymn and read the Bible night and morning; and, after evening wor-

ship, his children knelt before him and asked for his blessing before they retired to rest.

In the performance of the multitudinous duties which fell to the lot of a devoted minister in those days, George Cokayn's time must have been fully occupied. He was not only the leader of his flock in spiritual things, but their adviser in all the duties of life ; and their unfailing source of sympathy in every phase of sorrow which beset them. Day and night, summer and winter, were linked together in swift succession, and sixteen years glided quickly by, bringing at last that glorious liberty for which God's people had waited long and suffered much to obtain.

While history is silent concerning Cokayn during this period, his friends are presented before us, and their stories now claim attention.

CHAPTER X.

The Harecourt Church Register for 1696—Members of the Church—The First Deacons, John Strudwick and Robert Andrews—Particulars respecting Strudwick—Portrait of George Cokayn—When presented—Communion Service—Plate given by Sir B. Whitelocke and Sir R. Tichborne—John Milton in Bunhill Row—Probable Acquaintance with Cokayn—Deaths of Milton and Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke—John Nesbitt in the Marshalsea—Set at Liberty—Goes to Holland—The Presbyterians and the Romanists struggle for Pre-eminence—Satire on the King sung in a Conventicle—Sir John Moore becomes Lord Mayor—The Court Influence in his Favour—He betrays the City—Charges of Treason against the Earl of Shaftesbury and Samuel Wilson—Sir James Hay acts as a Spy—The Glover in Fleet Street—Both Charges fail—The Informer in Trouble.

AN old church register, which has lately been discovered,* contains a list of those belonging to the church in 1696, or a few years earlier; and in it are many names, familiar, from association with Cokayn, at

* By James Spicer, Esq., trustee.

the time of his ejection. Each is styled by the familiar prefix of sister or brother. Sister Cokayn, was the wife of the minister. Sister Willett, the wife or daughter, of Jacob Willett, of St. Laurence Lane. Sister Pendlebury was the widow of Lyte's fellow-bondsman. The occurrence of these names proves the connection between the old congregation and the new one in Redcross Street, and afterwards in Hare Court. The deacons are first mentioned in the title-deeds* of the land, on which the first "Stated-room" in Hare Court was built. They were, in 1692, Brother John Strudwick, and Brother Robert Andrews. Of the latter we know nothing. He died before 1696. Strudwick kept a grocer's-shop on Snow Hill, and over his door was a sign on which was painted a star.

* Now in the possession of the present occupier of the old Chapel in Hare Court, Mr. Thomas Whiteing, Sen.

There were certain things in the possession of the church then, which happily exist now, and to which it is necessary to allude, at this point. The first is the oil-painting which tradition declares to be the portrait of George Cokayn. This has always been in the possession of the Church, and there is no doubt of its genuineness. When, where, and by whom it was presented is conjectural. The congregation of Pancras may have subscribed for it, after the ejection of their favourite minister; or it may have originated amongst the congregation at Redcross Street. Judging from the portrait, he was probably in the prime of life at the time; and the attitude in which he stands, with his finger on the open page of a Bible, is strikingly characteristic. A large portion of the communion plate also dates from this time. Four of the silver dishes, with sunk centres and broad edges,

were presented by Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke. They bear his arms, and those of Mary Wilson, his third wife. A silver cup, without any engraving upon it, bears Hall marks, corresponding with those on the Whitelocke plates. This portion was probably presented to George Cokayn, for his personal use, after the marriage of Sir Bulstrode with Mary Wilson; and by Cokayn dedicated to the use of his Church in Soper Lane. There is also one cup which bears the arms of Sir Robert Tichborne, he who sat upon the trial of Charles I., signed his death-warrant, and afterwards died in the Tower. This was in all probability the parting gift to Cokayn, when Tichborne was about to leave his house, and surrender himself for trial. Since the time of Cokayn these sacred vessels have been made use of in the service of the Church. Generation after generation has passed away, from the

Church below to the Church above, since they first stood upon God's altar, in the house of the founder of Harecourt. We know hands have handled those plates that grasped swords in battles fought for the civil and religious liberty of England; and lips have kissed the cups that moved in prayer at the deaths of Cromwell, Milton, and Bunyan. It is probable that they form the oldest service of plate in the possession of any Dissenting Church in London, if not in the kingdom. They furnish also the most satisfactory evidence of the connection which existed between the donors and the Church.

We have not yet exhausted the list of Cokayn's neighbours. Close to Bunhill Fields there resided a blind man, who was

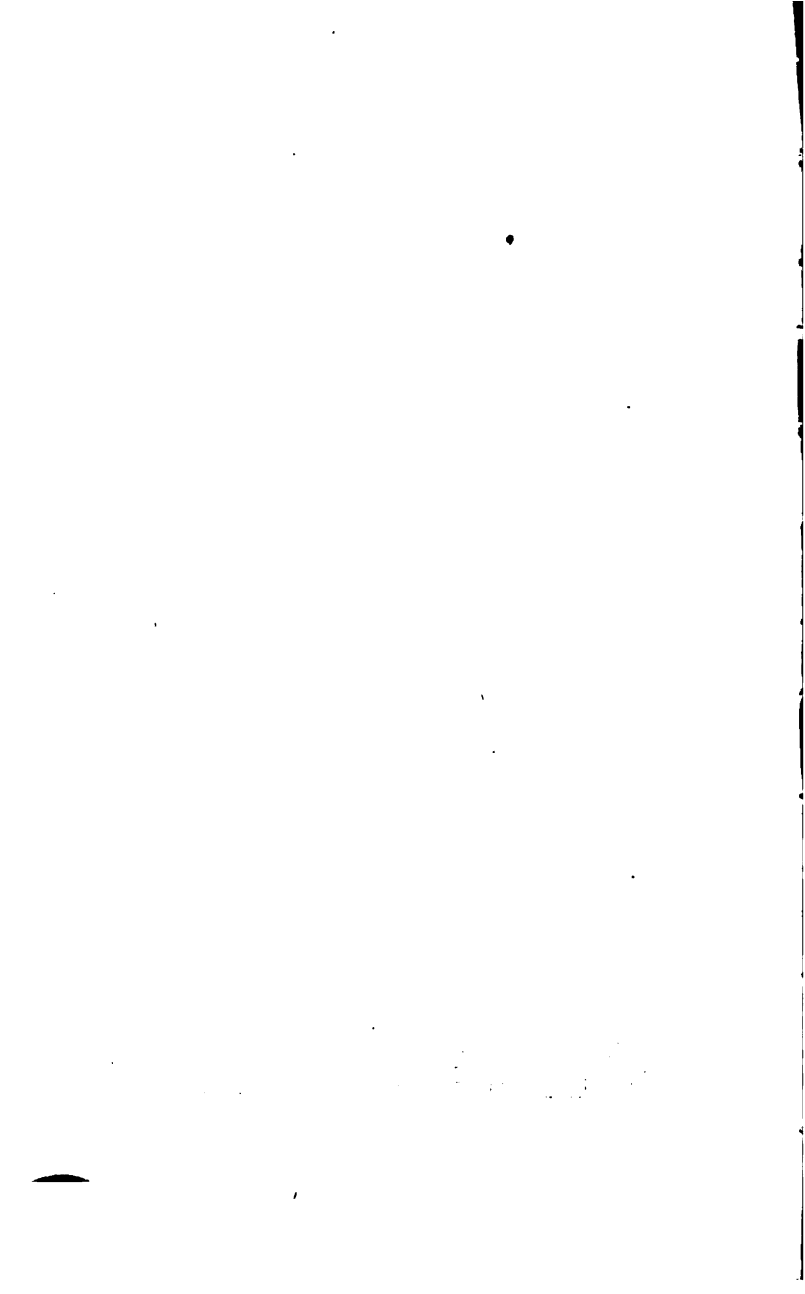
“ —neglected and passed by,”

towards the latter part of his life; but between whom and Cokayn there was a strong sympathetic feeling. They were both acquainted with



HARECOURT COMMUNION PLATE.

1. Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke's Plate.
2. Plate, the gift of a Widow Lady.
3. Sir Robert Tichborne's Cup.
4. Cup, with the Arms (probably) of a Miss Champneys.
5. Cup, with the Arms (probably) of Thomas Fletcher, Esq.



the best friends of Cromwell; and both were eminent in their respective pursuits. What more natural than that Cokayn, walking forth on summer afternoons, to enjoy the fresh country air, should loiter about that door where the blind man occasionally sat in the sunshine, to hear birds sing and dream of angelic hosts. They had lived close neighbours before the plague broke out; and he who was always spoken of by others as "that eminent minister," was no unfit companion for John Milton; nor was there anything in the life of either that could have rendered their acquaintance unpleasant. On the contrary, Cokayn had much to tell that Milton loved to hear; and their friendship is not a wild conjecture. Milton died in 1674, and was buried in the church of St. Giles, which stands at the bottom of Redcross Street; and Cokayn from a higher motive than one of curiosity—if they had not

been personally acquainted—was probably present at Milton's interment in the church.

In the year following the death of Milton, died Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke, at Chilton Lodge; and when his will was read, Cokayn was mentioned as his "beloved friend." To comfort the widow was an article of Cokayn's religion; and Mary Whitelocke, in the management of her great family, often required the advice of an experienced friend; so that there were two reasons why the old chaplain should be a frequent visitor at her house. With this event the connection between the Whitelockes and the Church is severed, so far as the purpose of our story is concerned.

The indulgence which the king granted in 1672 was withdrawn as soon as Parliament met, and the persecution of Fanatics became more severe than ever. There was also a serious fear of some Romish plot which greatly

agitated the country. In 1678 Nesbitt took part with other students, in the University of Edinburgh, in a demonstration against the Duke of York, which caused much excitement in Scotland. Orders were given for the arrest of the students. Nesbitt escaped from Scotland; but was captured in London, and thrown into the Marshalsea prison, where he languished for four months. Although only nineteen years of age, he possessed an inflexible will, which neither the annoyance of his imprisonment nor the promised favour of the king could shake. It was hoped that he would give up the names of those concerned with him in the outrage at Edinburgh, but he never did; and after a weary detention he was released. He then went to Holland, and completed his studies in a Dutch University. In 1679 the discussion relating to the Papists became very fierce; and in the literature of that date they were

represented as wrangling with the Presbyterians as to supremacy. A ballad in the Luttrell collection, at the British Museum, contains the following excellent verses :

“ A truce, a truce, quoth Presbyterian Jack,
We both love treason as loyalists sack,
And if either prevails the king goes to rack,
Which nobody can deny.

“ The bishops tell Charles we both have long nails,
And Charles shall find it if either prevails,
For, like Samson’s foxes, we are ty’d by the tails,
Which nobody can deny.”

In one conventicle at least, they varied the singing of David’s Psalms, by a satire upon the king and the age. The king was nicknamed Nimrod because of his fondness for hunting; and that makes the point of a verse, which was communicated by one who heard it to the Secretary of State. This was what they sang at Ralphson’s * Meeting-house :

* The assumed name of Jeremiah Marsden. He was imprisoned in Newgate for preaching, where he died,

“By Babel once confusion came,
Lord, send it over again;
And in confusion raise thy name,
Lest Nimrod and his reign.”

Ralphson was buried in Bunhill Fields in 1683; and that fact was reported to the Secretary of State, because of the multitude which witnessed his interment.

During the interval between 1672 and 1681, Sir John Moore had rapidly advanced in favour with the Court; and, in charity, we may hope he was unaware to what extent the king had determined to make a tool of him. He was elected to the office of Lord Mayor entirely by the Court influence. A messenger was sent in the king's name to all the royal tradesmen to be present at the election.* Immediately after it took place [September 29th] a messenger was despatched to the king, who was then at Newmarket, with the intelligence that Sir John

* *State Papers*, Letter dated Sept. 19, 1681.

Moore had been elected. The dispatch reached Newmarket on the following day, and finding "his Majesty was gone a-hawking," "the messenger would not stay till he had overtaken" him. In acknowledging the receipt of this communication, Lord Conway says,* "By the discourse I had formerly with his Majesty, and his resolution to have refused any but Sir John Moore, I know his Majesty will be very well pleased with it, and I offered last night in his bed-chamber to lay any wager that Sir John Moore would carry it." The matter which the Court was anxious to secure was nothing less than the possession of the City charters; and so obtain the direct government of all the corporations in the kingdom. There was some suspicion at the time that Sir John would play into the hands of the Court party; and amongst those who opposed his election

* *State Papers*, Letter dated Sept. 30, 1681.

was Samuel Wilson. So that if Cokayn was then friendly with Sir John, he must have differed from his friend Wilson. The policy of the king was still further disclosed in a letter written by Lord Conway to Mr. Secretary Jenkins, dated 8th of October, from Newmarket; in which he says, "If you can get the judges to stick to the king with courage and resolution in the regulation of the London juries, his Majesty will come to town very well pleased." The effect of this soon presented itself. Juries were selected who gave ruinous damages against those charged with sedition or libel against the king. All the City charters were declared forfeited; and nearly every corporate borough in England had in like manner to surrender its privileges. Informers were multiplied, and men of high social position condescended to play the spy upon those with whom they came in contact. The

Fanatics disappear from the State Papers, and informations for political offences are greatly multiplied. Russell and Sidney were tried at this period and executed. There were very few instances in which a charge was not maintained; but one notable exception was in the case of the Earl of Shaftesbury. He was then, as his descendant is now, a champion of Protestantism, and greatly beloved by the whole nation. Charges of a political character were trumped up against him, which were afterwards acknowledged to be false by the men who swore to them; and the grand jury threw out the bill. So general was the rejoicing that bon-fires were lighted in all the principal streets of the metropolis. In consequence of this Sir John Moore was directed to prohibit the making of bon-fires and the ringing of church bells in the future, without the permission of the Government. One of the State Papers,

which bears the signature of John Moore, acquaints Mr. Secretary Jenkins that according to his duty, on the instructions he had received, the necessary prohibition had been issued. He proceeded still further in the nomination of a sheriff named Dudley North to advance the king's views; and disorders ensued in the City which lasted for several months. Moore was strongly seconded by Jeffreys; and ultimately, after the most disgraceful acts, the City gave up for a time the right which she had previously possessed, to elect, without interference, her Lord Mayor and Sheriffs. Throughout the whole of his mayoralty* Sir John was exposed to the obloquy of many of the chief citizens; and his name, attached to Cokayn

* Sir J. Moore is Ziloah, in the second part of Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel." Charles II. allowed him to incorporate the lion of England with his family arms for the services which he rendered.

by that slender mention in Calamy, will be, without regret, allowed to sink into oblivion.

There was mixed up in the charges which resulted in the arrest of the Earl of Shaftesbury, a member of the Pancras congregation, with whom we are already acquainted, Samuel Wilson. He shared the feeling of indignation common to most people, at the arrest of the Earl; and one Sir James Hay, whose poverty drove him into becoming a common informer, volunteered to entrap Wilson. To the grandfather of this Hay, Charles I. granted certain trading monopolies in Nova Scotia, which brought in a revenue of £500 a year; but Charles II. transferred the land to the French king, and reduced the grandson to beggary. He became so poor as to be continually dunning a subordinate officer of the government for money; and in an account furnished, amongst

other articles supplied to him were "a beaver hat,* a silver sword, and a perriwig," at a cost of £6 10s. Sir James Hay waited about Wilson's place of business at the Tower, until he came out to go into the City, and then with honeyed phrases thrust himself forward, and sought to betray Wilson into all sorts of seditious expressions. The informations which Hay sent in are of the most ridiculous character.† In one he relates that he had been with Samuel Wilson at the "Bear," in Birchin Lane, and the latter said that Shaftesbury "would soon appear glorious and great in the world, and then they would all be great;" "that the king was perjured in breaking the covenant," and similar phrases. Sir James asked him what they intended to do with the king; and Wilson replied, "Don't you know what witty Oliver said? 'Give him a shoulder

* *State Papers*, October 3, 1681.

† *Ibid.*, October 11, 1681.

of mutton and a mistress, and that is all he cares for.'” In this way the stupid knight sought to entrap the merchant. On the 12th of October Wilson made his appearance before the king's Council—the Earl of Halifax, Lord Conway, Lord Hyde, and Mr. Secretary Jenkins. Selected portions from the statements of informers were read; and he was subjected to a sharp examination. He carried himself with great haughtiness before the Council; denied the accusations that were made of treason; and demanded that his accusers might be brought before his face, that the matter might be settled without more ado. But this did not suit the mode of administering justice in those days. It is probable that he was committed to Newgate, to await his trial at the same sessions of the Old Bailey which were rendered memorable by the acquittal of the Earl of Shaftesbury. In the meantime, measures were taken to bolster

up the charge as strongly as possible in order to secure a conviction. Two days after Wilson's appearance before the Council, a worthy but vain tradesman, with whom he had had dealings, was carried before Mr. Secretary Jenkins, and obliged to make a statement which was afterwards taken down in writing. It is by certain facts in his narrative, the identification of Wilson is established in his relation to this story. The examination is that of Benjamin Clarke, of Fleet Street, milliner, and is dated October 14th, 1681.* "This examinant saith that he hath been acquainted with Mr. Samuel Wilson about half a year, and he was his customer for one pair of fringed gloves [*only one pair!*]. His acquaintance with Mr. Wilson happened upon occasion of Mr. John Whitlock and Mr. Stephen Whitlock, kinsmen to Wilson, were lodged in this examinant's house—Mr.

* *State Papers*, October 14, 1681.

John Whitlock being a mercer in Paternoster Row, Mr. Stephen Whitlock being of the Chancery Office." Then he proceeds to narrate under what circumstances he became acquainted with Sir James Hay. They had talked together with Wilson about some gloves and about the Earl of Shaftesbury. He "was once at the Castle Tavern in Fleet Street, with Sir James Hay and his lady, and Mr. Samuel Wilson, where they drank one bottle of claret; and the occasion of the examinant's going thither was to carry Mr. Wilson's gloves to him, who, after Sir James and his lady were gone, gave this examinant one pint of wine more, and then Wilson showed this examinant a patent under the hands of the Earls of Coventry, Shaftesbury, and others, granting to the said Sir James 3,000 acres of land in Carolina, which Mr. Wilson said he would give Sir James five guineas for, if he would not accept it himself." This deposition

is full of interest, and the points in the characters of the leading figures are admirably drawn. Sir James was actually indebted to the Earl of Shaftesbury for a grant of land in New England, and he tried to sell his patent for five guineas to another whom he wanted to ruin. Land in Carolina must have been very cheap when 3,000 acres were for sale at so low a figure. Mr. Wilson, pleased with his new gloves, and revolving in his mind the purchase of the patent, orders one pint of wine more, which the two drank. Clarke must have been celebrated for his gloves, by the manner in which he dragged them into his statement; and the garrulous fellow was made to swear to his statement through the knavery of Sir James Hay. On the 15th of October, another information was sworn against Wilson, and this was by Sir James Hay; but there is not a phrase in it which bears the slightest complexion of treason.

A digest of all the informations was prepared, and one man put these words into the mouth of Wilson, "that what was done for the Protestant cause was nothing but what they ought to do, to save their estates, lives, and souls from ruin." The indictment was thrown out by the grand jury, to the joy of all Wilson's friends; but he was kept in prison for some time afterwards, according to a very curious petition which was presented by a prisoner named Booth, under date of December 2nd. This fellow was one of the informers against the Earl of Shaftesbury, and upon action being taken, he was cast into Newgate, where he appears to have spent a very miserable time. He entreated the Secretary of State to release or remove him, and says,* "I wish you could but see how apparent Wilson's supplies are both in his habit and expenses, and what a crowd

* *State Papers*, December 2, 1681.

of fanatics are continually about him. If I lived low in another prison it would not trouble me so much, but here not only I but a good cause are run down together. If I had my liberty I am satisfied a second bill would be found at Oxford." Sir James Hay also suffered from the righteous indignation of the populace, for his share in the transaction. He was unrewarded, and the secret-service money withdrawn, he soon fell into poverty.* In a petition to the king, he complains that no allowance has been granted to him; or any regard taken of his services. He craves to be preserved from the malice of those whom he has "disobliged;" and complains not only that his name is abused in print, but that the people watch his lodgings to annoy him. This shows the popularity of Samuel Wilson in the City. Twice in the same month Sir

* *State Papers*, December 1, 1681.

James Hay prayed for help; so that his need must have been very great. On March 14, 1684 he addressed the following letter to Mr. Secretary Jenkins:—

“RIGHT HONOURABLE,

“My wife having lately waited upon the Marquess Halifax, to implore his assistance in representing to your honour and others in whose power it is to relieve me, that I am in a most deplorable condition in the common side of the King’s Bench prison; she was instructed by his lordship to make application to you, and I humbly beg of you to believe me that a greater object of pity and charity is not in the three kingdoms, and I beg of you for Jesus Christ’s sake to take my sad condition into your charitable consideration, and bestow something upon me of your own bounty, knowing I am a gentleman and in great distress. God will

bleſs you to relieve the poor and afflicted. Sir, all humility and ſubmiſſion, I am, right honourable, your honour's moſt to be pitied ſuppliant,

“JAMES HAY.

“ From the common ſide of the King's

“ Bench priſon in Southwark.”

In ſubſequent petitions to the king he gave an outline of his family hiſtory, with the reverses which he had ſuffered. What became of him it is hardly worth any trouble to diſcover. At the ſame time, we ſuffer Samuel Wilſon to diſappear, with a note of admiration for the courage which he exhibited on all thoſe occaſions when the State Papers have preſented him before us.

CHAPTER XI.

Magistrates hunting Fanatics—Trick played upon them—Accession of James II.—The brutal Jeffreys—Erection of Conventicles—The Stocking Weavers' Hall, Redcross Street—John Bunyan visits John Strudwick—Bunyan sends a Sermon to Press—Is taken ill of Fever—Nursed by Strudwick—Visited by Friends—His dying Sayings—Buried in Strudwick's Vault at Bunhill—Cokayn revises the unfinished Proofs of the Sermon—Writes the Preface—Strudwick's Work as a Deacon—Disappears from the Church Register—Probable Date of Death—His Interment in the same Vault as Bunyan—Accession of William and Mary—Cokayn's Illness—Preaches from a Chair—Choice of Nesbitt as Minister—Death of Cokayn, in his 73rd year—Burial in Bunhill Fields.

IN the year of Sir John Moore's mayoralty there were very strong measures taken by the magistrates and the Church party to suppress conventicles in the City. They had become so numerous, and the attendance so large, that a feeling of fear was

engendered as to their political influence. It was left for the magistrates to take the initiative; and one Mr. L. C. Rich made the following report to the Secretary of State upon what he had done.* The document bears date December 18, 1681. "Last night Mr. Pyers, Mr. Freeman, and myself met to consider on a method to proceed against conventicles. We sent to some other justices to come to our assistance, but they did not appear. This morning we three (*a suggestive number*) met, and called the constables, churchwardens, and overseers of the respective parishes to our assistance, who did come, and went with us. The first we came to was an Anabaptist, where were assembled about one hundred and fifty poor mechanical fellows, and the preacher was like them. Upon our demand he came from his pulpit. But when we asked his name

* *State Papers.*

one of his assembly made answer : 'The law did not direct the man to tell it.' We observed one or two whom we should know of our own knowledge. . . . From this we went to Vincent's, but he hearing of our coming slipt away, and set his conventicle to singing of David's Psalms. The more the justice talked to them, and required them to disperse, the louder they sang. [*The scene may be imagined. A justice: 'I command you in the king's name to disperse.' The people singing:—*

' Let God arise, and scattered
let all His en'mies be ;
And let all those that do Him hate
before His presence flee.
As smoke is driv'n, so drive Thou them ;
as fire melts wax away,
Before God's face let wicked men
so perish and decay.']

We could not get either churchwardens, overseers of the poor, or constables, to give us the name of any one person—pretended

altogether ignorance. [*They were all struggling to suppress their laughter, no doubt.*]

There, we know, Mr. John Cholmley, his Majesty's brewer, and an alderman. The other conventicles, hearing of our coming, dispersed themselves. From the whole, I do perceive, that in case they do suppress, it must proceed from all the justices appearing jointly in the thing. And unless his Majesty commands them before him, I do perceive they will not appear zealous in it. And then also, if they proceed not upon the Oxford Act, I do not perceive they value the other, for they will get watch and spies for our coming, that we shall never catch them preaching or holding forth, and we shall not get any of their people to inform, for they are afraid the others will destroy them." That is an admirable illustration of some of the difficulties under which the fanatics and their opponents laboured.

In 1685 James II. ascended the throne, and two years afterwards,—the work of the brutal Jeffreys intervening,—the king made a declaration of indulgence, wider in its scope than that which was granted by Charles II. A new impetus was immediately given to the Dissenting congregations; and the erection of a large number of chapels was forthwith commenced. But no step was taken to erect a place of worship by the members of Cokayn's congregation at that time, nor until after his death. There was in Redcross Street a hall belonging to the stocking-weavers; and there is ground for supposing that when his own dwelling-house became too small for the congregation, the hall was hired in which to worship upon the Sabbath.

In the autumn of 1688 an event happened which adds fresh lustre to the church of Harecourt. One wet night in August there rode up to the house of Deacon Strudwick,

on Snow Hill, a man of some fifty-nine years, whose clothes were soaking with wet. The greeting between the two men proved they were old acquaintances, and that a bond of more than ordinary friendship existed between them. The stranger's face was that of a man of undaunted resolution, yet there was a dreaminess about the expression of the eye that betokened a religious enthusiast. His hair was iron grey, and there was a certain yielding of the frame, as of a man who had long passed the prime of his days. Since this man did duty as a soldier at the siege of Leicester he had passed twelve years in prison, and the chief product of that imprisonment was the "Pilgrim's Progress." It was John Bunyan who was the guest of John Strudwick. The great Baptist preacher was at home with the Independent deacon. Of the visit only one fact is known; everything else is con-

jectural. The difference in their religious principles will hardly occasion surprise when Bunyan's famous expression is remembered: "I know no sect. I am a Christian." In all probability several days elapsed before Bunyan showed symptoms of illness. During that interval he sent a sermon upon a Broken Heart to be printed at the Hand and Bible, on London Bridge, and revised a few of the proof sheets himself. But before the whole of the sermon was in type he was laid up with fever, caught through riding in the rain on the day of his arrival in London. The deep concern which must have beset Strudwick's household at the illness of their guest may be imagined. The distance from Redcross Street was not great, and the first person consulted would probably be George Cokayn. Taken ill at the house of one of Cokayn's deacons, it is not unreasonable to suppose that he was one of the earliest to visit the

sick pilgrim, and render what help he could on such an emergency. For ten days Bunyan lingered, waiting "for the good hour" when the post should "come from the celestial city."* During this time he conversed with his host, and the friends who visited him, upon "Sin," "Affliction," "Repentance and Coming to Christ," "Prayer," and kindred topics.† Fragments of this conversation were committed to writing by Strudwick, and afterwards published. When his friend spoke with him about the strangeness of his affliction, he replied, "The Lord useth his flail of tribulation to separate the chaff from the wheat. The school of the cross is the school of light, it discovers the world's vanity, baseness, and wickedness, and lets us see more of God's mind. Out of dark afflictions comes a spiritual light."

* "The Pilgrim's Progress."

† "Dying Words of John Bunyan."

Some one asked his advice about prayer, and he replied, "When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words, than thy words without heart. Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer. Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan." When the Sabbath came, and he heard the bells of St. Sepulchre's ringing for divine worship, his thoughts were filled with the sanctity and glory of the day. "Have a special care to sanctify the Lord's day," he said to those about him, "for as thou keepest it, so it will be with thee all the week long. Make the Lord's day the market for thy soul, let the whole day be spent in prayer, repetitions or meditations; lay aside the affairs of the other part of the week, let the sermon thou hast heard be converted into prayer. Shall God allow thee six days, and wilt not thou

afford him one? In the church be careful to serve God, for thou art in his eye and not in man's. Thou mayest hear sermons often, and do well in practising what thou hearest; but thou must not expect to be told thee in a pulpit all that thou oughtest to do, but be studious in searching the Scriptures and reading good books. What thou hearest may be forgotten, but what thou readest may better be retained. Forsake not the public worship of God, lest God forsake thee, not only in public but in private."

As his illness increased, his mind recalled the old days of persecution, and the friends with whom he used to meet. "I have often thought," he said, "the best of Christians are found in the worst of times, and I have thought again that one reason why we are no better, is because God purges us no more. Noah and Lot, who so holy as they in the time of their afflictions, and yet who so idle

as they in the time of their prosperity?" Day by day he thus talked with those who sat beside him, and John Strudwick was always near to jot down his words. It was when near death that his old enemy, the devil, began to plague him, and turning to those near, he told them "as the devil labours by all means to keep out other things that are good, so to keep out of the heart as much as in him lies, the thoughts of passing from this life into another world; for he knows if he can but keep them from the serious thoughts of death, he shall the more easily keep their sins." Then, as in a moment of sudden inspiration, he cried out, "O sinner, what a condition wilt thou fall into when thou departest this world, if thou depart unconverted! Thou hadst better have been smothered the first hour thou wast born; thou hadst better have been plucked one limb from another; thou hadst better

have been made a dog, a toad, a serpent, than to die unconverted. This thou wilt find true if thou repent not." As the pilgrim drew near to the edge of that river which he described as very deep, and over which there was no bridge, he had a glimpse of the land upon the other side, and shaking off for a moment the lethargic fever, he told those around his bed "of the joys of heaven." "There is no good in this life," he cried out, "but what is mingled with some evil. Honours perplex, riches disquiet, and pleasures ruin health; but in Heaven we shall find blessings in their purity without any ingredient to embitter, with everything to sweeten them. Oh! who is able to conceive the inexpressible, inconceivable joys that are there? None but those who have tasted of them. Lord, help us to put such a value upon them here, that in order to prepare ourselves for them, we may be will-

ing to forego the loss of all those deluding pleasures here. How will the heavens echo their joy, when the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall come to dwell with her husband for ever ! Christ is the desire of nations, the joy of angels, the delight of the Father—what solace then must that soul be filled with that hath the possession of Him to all eternity !

“Oh what acclamations of joy will there be when all the children of God shall meet together, without fear of being disturbed by the antichristian and carnish blood ! Is there not a time coming when the godly may ask the wicked, what profit they have in their pleasure, what comfort in their greatness ? and what fruit in all their labour ? If you would be better satisfied what the beautiful vision means, my request is, that you would live holily, and go and see.”

There followed disjointed exclamations, by which it was supposed he contrasted

the joy of the saints with the agony of the damned, and his last recorded words were "saints in the world to come." Then John Bunyan entered the river, and those who watched presently knew that he had passed over to the other side. He died August 17, 1688, and was buried in a vault, belonging to Strudwick, in Bunhill Fields. There is no record by whom the funeral service was conducted, or of whom the funeral procession was composed; but with the facts that have come to light now, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Cokayn laid the body of the immortal pilgrim to rest in the well-known vault, now surmounted by his effigy. The unrevised sheets of Bunyan's sermon were corrected by George Cokayn, who also wrote the preface; and upon reading this, it will be evident that the two men must have been personally acquainted. The connection between Bunyan and Strudwick is

conclusively proved by the Church Register. Strudwick's name appears in an alphabetical list at the beginning of the book, with the word "deceased" written against it; and an examination of the accounts shows that the last time he acted as a deacon was in September, 1697. He was alive in December of that year, as appears from the fact that he paid his quarterly proportion of the £10 which he contributed towards the support of the ministry. At this period the year ended March 24, and 1698 would therefore begin on March 25. Strudwick's name does not appear either as an acting deacon or as contributor in the lists commencing with March 25, 1698, therefore he must have died between December, 1697, and March 24, 1697. If it can be proved that he not only died between these dates, but was buried in the same vault as Bunyan, the identity of Deacon Strudwick with the gro-

cer of Snow Hill will be established. This proof is furnished by a volume of "Notes and Queries" for 1864.* A contributor who signs himself "H. J. S." writes, "I have just discovered, in the handwriting of Dr. Richard Rawlinson, LL.D., a copy of the inscription which formerly existed on the tomb in which was interred the author of the 'Pilgrim's Progress.'"

HERE LYES THE BODY OF
MR. JOHN BUNYAN,
Author of 'The Pilgrim's Progress,'

AGED 59,
WHO DYED AUG. 17, 1688.

HERE LIES THE BODY OF
MR. JOHN STRUDWICK,
AGED 43 YEARS,
WHO DYED THE 15TH DAY OF JAN., 1697.

ALSO THE BODY OF
MRS. PHŒBE BRAGGE,†
WHO DIED THE 15TH JULY, 1718.

* June 11, 1864. Page 475.

† Wilson supposes that Mrs. Bragge was a daughter of Strudwick.

HERE ALSO LIES THE BODY OF THE
REV. ROB. BRAGGE,
Minister of the Gospel,
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE FEBRUARY THE 12TH, 1737,
ÆTATIS 70."

Up to the present time nothing whatever beyond his name, his trade, and his residence has been known of Strudwick; henceforward Harecourt may make this sacred boast, that John Bunyan died in the house of one of her first deacons. We have slightly digressed by referring to the death of Bunyan's host, which took place in the time of John Nesbitt. On the Sunday following Bunyan's burial, Cokayn probably alluded to the death of the great pilgrim. The preface which he wrote to Bunyan's sermons is the last work which emanated from his pen.

The political events which followed the trial of the Seven Bishops are well known. James soon fled, never to return. George

Cokayn was actively engaged in the work of the ministry after the accession of William and Mary; after that time, when every bond was relaxed, when civil liberty was obtained, and toleration in religious matters secured, then the infirmities of advancing age seized upon him. He had lived to be seventy-one before the Church thought of a successor. When he became so paralysed in his lower limbs that he could not walk, he expressed an anxious desire for his successor to be appointed. From an Elegy which is preserved,* certain interesting facts are obtained. The Church first had recourse to prayer for guidance. During this period Cokayn continued to study in his bed during the week, and upon the Sabbath was carried in a chair to preach to the congregation. What a grand picture does this fact supply! The aged minister,

* In the Luttrell Collection at the British Museum.

with his long white hair, sitting in a chair before the congregation, and telling them the old old story in some strange new fashion, as it had been hammered out by his busy brain during the week: bidding them always do their duty, and walk direct to Christ; and then closing with a prayer for the peace of the Church, and the coming of the kingdom. There was doubtless never any lack of stout friends, members of his own Church, to carry that sedan-chair to and fro from his house to the place where he preached and back again. Possibly his deacons kept that work amongst themselves, as one of the privileges to which they were entitled by their position in the Church, and it was a work of which any man had reason to boast of having a share. At last* God sent the Church a new pastor in John Nesbitt. The Elegy lays stress upon one point

* The Elegy. See Appendix, p. 265.

in his election, that he was invited by the unanimous vote of the Church, and that was one of the chief things upon which Cokayn had set his heart. Thus there flashes out at the very last that love of unity which was one of his characteristics. At length the time came for George Cokayn to die. Surely it was not an unwelcome event to one who had been so tossed upon the troubled billows of life as he had. Those friends with whom he set out on the journey of life were nearly all dead. Sir Robert Tichborne was dead; Sir Bulstrode, his first patron, was also dead; Sir John Ireton was in all probability dead; John Milton was dead; John Bunyan dead; William Pendlebury, his bondsman, dead. The deaths of such friends as these must have sufficed so to dull the sweet charm of living, as to leave death desirable. He had been permitted to see great results follow his labour.

That Church which he had fostered in the homes of those who loved him, and who honoured Christ, worshipped God without fear. He had been spared through all those troublous years which linked Cromwell with William and Mary; to see civil and religious liberty established on a firm basis. His congregation was large, his Church was united and active; one spirit pervaded the whole. Bodily infirmities had so fastened upon him, that he was physically unable to go in and out amongst those he loved, as had been his custom. The Church had chosen her future pastor, so the last link that bound him to life was loosened. One cold winter night, November 21st, 1691, the summons came, and the grand old man, full of years, laid down the burden of life. In the house in which for many years he preached Free Grace for Sinners to all who came, he lay dead. It may be

that his body was laid out in that big chamber which had often echoed with his voice, and that all the members of his Church gathered about him there before the day of burial came, and said to one another in their grief, "Our father is indeed dead." He was seventy-two years of age when death came, and forty-two years were spent amongst the same congregation. The Elegy, to which reference has already been made, reminded his friends that they were to meet at Stocking-weavers' Hall, in Redcross Street, on Friday, to proceed to the funeral. John Nesbitt probably took the leading share in the service, and while that was going on, some one went into St. Giles's Church, and made this entry in the burial register: "November 27, George Cockaine, gent., aged, Tindall's." When a certain portion of the funeral ceremony had been gone through, the procession was formed, and

they bore the first pastor of Harecourt to Tindall's ground, or, as it is now termed, Bunhill burial-fields. There, in some forgotten portion of those sacred fields, surrounded by many a noble preacher, George Cokayn found his final earthly resting-place. Mrs. Cokayn survived her husband several years, and died in the beginning of 1697.

Looking back over those forty-two years which comprehended his ministerial labours, many points attract special attention. When he started upon his career, he set before his soul a work amongst perishing men and women, and with a purpose which never wavered, he laboured on in all the changing scenes through which he passed, until his death. At the most promising point of his life, when a bright future appeared before him, he turned aside, and from the pulpit of Margaret's, Westminster, descended to labour for the future amongst the people of the

City, in whose midst his church stood. By his devotion he was permitted to build up a Church, destined to survive a dynasty of kings, and flourish through centuries. All men were comprehended in the grace which he proffered on behalf of his Great Master. Toleration could not be more wide, nor liberty more free. Two hundred years elapsed before the nation could appreciate the full glory of the liberty which he taught in Pancras, Soper Lane. At one time he seemed to have the gift of prophecy, so clearly did he describe the sorrows of the godly after the death of Cromwell. The grand dedication which he made of himself to God, gave him great power over the lives of the members of his congregation. His people acted from a diviner principle than was common in those days, and which they drew into themselves from their minister. Full of a grand energy, he animated his Church even in the

last glimmer of his earthly life. He was also a man capable of deep affection. In his sermons and writings he speaks from the heart to the heart; and it is a suggestive fact that his last work was an analysis of a broken heart. His friends were bound up with him by a bond of love which survived the test of persecution and the fire of imprisonment. Over the sorrow-stricken members of his Church he kept a loving and patient oversight. We learn incidentally from his sermon on the death of Colonel Underwood, that he paid frequent visits to his widow, and exercised all the arts of which he was master in administering consolation. He sets forth the visiting of the widow as pure religion. Such a man could not fail to bind the hearts of his congregation to himself by a bond which neither time nor changing circumstances could ever sever. His fame as a preacher was widespread,

and heartily acknowledged by contemporaries. He was in every way fitted for the glorious work he performed—the gathering together and building up a noble Christian Church; and we may hope that in some vision he was permitted to see the Church which he founded increased in numbers a hundredfold; engaged in planting out fresh congregations in new districts; and bound together by the same sweet bond of union which he, two hundred and twenty-three years before, first inspired in Pancras, Soper Lane.

Within a month of Cokayn's death, died Richard Baxter, in his seventy-fifth year. No positive fact connects these two divines together, and, therefore, we have abstained from referring to him previously; but their courses were so nearly allied, that it may be reasonably supposed they knew each other personally.

CHAPTER XII.

The first "Stated Room" in Hare Court—Erected by John Nesbitt—The Title-deeds—Strudwick and Robert Andrews first Trustees—The Church Register—Names mentioned—Memoranda by Nesbitt—Benjamin Clarke cast out—The Change in Fashion—Nesbitt's Assistants—Addison's Satire quoted by Macaulay—Nesbitt's Sermons—Hurion's Sermon on Nesbitt—Nesbitt's Ministerial Work—Doctrinal Belief—As a Controversialist—Private Life—His long Illness—Selects the Text of his Funeral Sermon—His Wish concerning Death realised—Dies in his Sixty-seventh Year—Buried in Bunhill—Ancient Latin Inscription on his Tomb—Present Position of the Vault—Subsequent Ministers in Harecourt.

THE first building erected by the Church was called the "Stated Room," and it was in all probability a very modest-looking structure. George Cokayn, towards the latter part of his life, selected two pieces of ground between Redcross Street and Aldersgate Street, as the future home of the Church. The

land belonged to Sir H. Ashurst, of Waterstock, a distinguished Christian. Hare Court was then fringed with poplars, and the pathway from Aldersgate Street to Redcross Street lay between gardens. On the feast day of St. Michael the Archangel, 1691, it was determined that a room should be erected upon one of the plots of ground, and a house for the minister upon the other. The chief parties to this arrangement were John Nesbitt, the new minister, and John Strudwick and Robert Andrews, deacons. Cokayn, no doubt, gave his sanction to the arrangement; but it was not until January 13, 169 $\frac{1}{2}$, nearly two months after his death, that the first legal document was drawn up between the contracting parties. A clause in the indenture speaks of "the building then intended to be erected upon the said piece or parcel of ground as the said John Strudwick and Robert Andrews should think needful." So

that George Cokayn never preached in either of the two chapels which were erected in Hare Court.

From the appointment of John Nesbitt the history of the Church is furnished from very different sources than those upon which we have previously drawn. Had it not been for the discovery of the Church Register, we should have known less about Nesbitt's work and Church than we now know of George Cokayn. There is a list of Church members numbering two hundred and seventy-six; and an examination of this presents several interesting features. Many of the names have a sweet puritanic ring about them which are pleasant to read. Grace and Ruth Foster, Mercy Greatheede, Grizel Nellwood, Patience Wilcox, Sister Janaway, Sister Crispe, Hester Ludlow. Sister Underhill was a lady who made a bequest to the Church in 1703. Amongst others are several whose

names suggest the continuous connection of certain families with Harecourt, from 1696 to the present year. One of these is Sister Mary Spicer. The deacons in 1696 were John Strudwick, grocer, Snow Hill; Joseph Biscoe, apothecary, Westminster; Samuel Irons, barber-surgeon, London; Peter Walker, ironmonger, London; Samuel Reade, merchant, London; Nehemiah Lyde, merchant, Hackney; George Cressner, grocer, London; and Thomas Nisbett, merchant, London. Brothers Fox and Grosvenor also officiated as deacons, but their descriptions are not known. The name of Brother Robert Andrews does not appear; but an Andrew is mentioned in the register with the word "deceased" against it. That list bears internal evidence of having been written prior to 1696. There is no handwriting similar to it in any other part of the book. Names are in the list that do not appear amongst the contributors to the

Church funds in 1696. Against a number of the names entries have been made in the handwriting of John Nesbitt; and these reveal the inner life of the Church. Two men, Brother Briggs and Brother Marshall, Jun., have against their names the word "excommunicated." This was, probably, owing to some theological defect. Against the names of Brother Benjamin Clarke and Brother Moses Carter are the words "cast out." The first of those names corresponds with the unfortunate glover of Fleet Street, who swore an information against Samuel Wilson, and he may be identical with the man afterwards "cast out" from the Church. A more agreeable series of entries reveal the fact that many marriages took place amongst the members of the Church. Against the entry "Sister Priscilla Rawlins" is written "now Nisbett."* Sister Rawlins was, judging from

* Probably a nephew of John Nesbitt.

the amount of her subscriptions, a leading member of the Church. Amongst other entries to the same effect are Sister Andrews, now Greene; Sister Elizabeth Bull,* now Threlgall; Sister Birch, now Coffin; Sister Crooke, now Harrison; Sister Chadburne, now Freeman. The entries are too numerous to quote.

Glancing round the "Stated Room," a marked alteration in the fashion of dress is noticeable. The long flowing locks of natural hair, which gentlemen wore, have been supplanted by wigs; and the ladies' ringlets have given way to a monstrosity built up of hair and ornaments. Nesbitt preached in a long wig, as shown in his portrait; but flowing locks of natural hair, which his predecessor wore, were much more graceful. Nes-

* Elizabeth Bull was daughter of the chapel keeper. In 1780 Mrs. Green had charge of the chapel, and she was succeeded by her daughter, Mrs. Bennett, who was in her seventy-first year in 1871.

bitt lived in a house adjacent to the chapel, surrounded by trees and garden ground. His salary was £120 a year, paid in quarterly instalments. From a very early period of his connection with the Church he appears to have suffered from ill health. In the September quarter of 1696 he had no fewer than eight assistants who received 10s. for each sermon. The names of these are first mentioned in the commencement of 1698. They were White, Peirce, Stounds, Clarke, Ashwood, Short, and Wallis. Mr. Matthew Clarke was the minister of Miles Lane congregation, and rendered occasional assistance down to 1705. Of the others little or nothing is known. The energy and liberality of the congregation is apparent from the fact that there does not appear to have been any debt upon the "Stated Room" five years after its erection; and upon a favourable opportunity presenting itself they bought the land on





THE REV. JOHN NESBITT.

which the chapel and parsonage house were built for £525. The congregation rapidly increased in numbers and in influence under John Nesbitt.

As a preacher and adviser, Nesbitt rapidly became famous; and Addison "indulged in some exquisite pleasantry" at his expense. In No. 317 of the *Spectator*, he gives extracts from a pretended journal of a retired citizen, a member of Mr. Nesbitt's congregation. We make no apology for reprinting the extracts.

"Monday, eight o'clock, I put on my clothes, and walked into the parlour.

"Nine o'clock, ditto, tied my knee-string and washed my hands.

"Hours ten, eleven and twelve. Smoked three pipes of Virginia. Read the *Supplement* and *Daily Courant*. Things go ill in the North. Mr. Nisby's opinion thereupon.

"One o'clock in the afternoon. Chid Ralph for mislaying my tobacco-box.

"Two o'clock. Sat down to dinner. Mem.
Too many plums and no suet.

"From three to four. Took my afternoon's
nap.

"From four to six. Walked into the fields.
Wind S.S.E.

"From six to ten. At the club. Mr. Nis-
by's opinion about the peace.

"Ten o'clock. Went to bed, slept sound.

"Tuesday, being holiday, eight o'clock.
Rose as usual.

"Nine o'clock. Washed hands and face,
shaved, put on my double-soled shoes.

"Ten, eleven, twelve. Took a walk to
Islington.

"One. Took a pot of Mother Cob's mild.

"Between two and three. Returned, dined
on a knuckle of veal and bacon. Mem.
Sprouts wanting.

"Three. Nap as usual.

"From four to six. Coffee-house. Read

the news. A dish of twist. Grand vizier strangled.

"From six to ten. At the club. Mr. Nisby's account of the great Turk.

"Ten. Dream of the grand vizier. Broken sleep.

"Wednesday, eight o'clock. Tongue of my shoe-buckle broke. Hands, but not face.

"Nine. Paid off the butcher's bill. Mem. To be allowed for the last leg of mutton.

"Ten, eleven. At the coffee-house. More work in the north. Stranger in a black wig asked me how stocks went.

"From twelve to one. Walked in the fields. Wind to the south.

"From one to two. Smoked a pipe and a half.

"Two. Dined as usual. Stomach good.

"Three. Nap broke by the falling of a pewter dish. Mem. Cook-maid in love, and grown careless.

"From four to six. At the coffee-house. Advice from Smyrna that the grand vizier was first of all strangled, and afterwards beheaded.

"Six o' clock in the evening. Was half an hour in the club before anybody else came. Mr. Nisby of opinion that the grand vizier was not strangled the sixth instant.

"Ten at night. Went to bed. Slept, not waking until nine the next morning.

"Thursday, nine o'clock. Stayed within until two o'clock for Sir Timothy, who did not bring me my annuity according to his promise.

"Two in the afternoon. Sat down to dinner. Loss of appetite. Small-beer sour. Beef over-corned.

"Three. Could not take my nap.

"Four and five. Gave Ralph a box on the ear. Turned off my cook-maid. Sent a messenger to Sir Timothy. Mem. I did not

go to the club to-night. Went to bed at nine o'clock.

"Friday. Passed the morning in meditation upon Sir Timothy, who was with me a quarter before twelve.

"Twelve o'clock. Bought a new head to my cane, and a tongue to my buckle. Drank a glass of port to recover appetite.

"Two and three. Dined and slept well.

"From four to six. Went to the coffee-house. Met Mr. Nisby there. Smoked several pipes. Mr. Nisby of opinion that laced coffee is bad for the head.

• "Six o'clock. At the club as steward. Sat late.

"Twelve o'clock. Went to bed. Dreamt that I drank small beer with the grand vizier.

"Saturday. Waked at eleven, walked in the fields. Wind N.E.

"Twelve. Caught in a shower.

“One in the afternoon. Returned home and dried myself.

“Two. Mr. Nisby dined with me. First course, marrow - bones ; second, ox-cheek, with a bottle of Brooks and Hellier.

“Three. Overslept myself.

“Six. Went to the club. Like to have fallen into a gutter. Grand vizier certainly dead.”

The picture of a life filled with “inconsiderable actions,” was shown to perfection in the extract ; and infinite amusement was caused at the same time by the playful satire upon Mr. Nesbitt, whose fondness for good living was, no doubt, a slander.

In 1705, the Rev. James Naylor succeeded the Rev. Matthew Clarke as assistant preacher, and he died of consumption within three years, in the twenty-ninth year of his age, and was buried in Bunhill Fields. Various supplies were obtained as the necessity arose from

1708 to 1710, and in the latter year the Rev. John Conder became assistant pastor. Mr. Conder occupied the same position throughout the ministerial career of the Rev. John Hurion and the Rev. Samuel Bruce, and died in 1744, four years after the appointment of the Rev. Dr. King.

Out of six sermons which were published by Nesbitt four are now in existence. In the British Museum there are two. His sermon to young men, preached April 6, 1713; and a sermon on the death of the Rev. John Russell, preached at Newington Green in 1714. At Dr. Williams's library are a funeral sermon for the Rev. Thomas Rouge, preached in 1700; and a sermon to young women, delivered in 1716.

The best outline of Nesbitt's career is supplied by his successor, the Rev. John Hurion (appointed in 1724), who preached the funeral sermon, October 29, 1727. Upon

this occasion, the text was from Col. iii. 3, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." At the close of the sermon, which is a very fine one, he read the following touching story of the life, work, and death of Nesbitt :—

"These words," the words of the text, "were chosen by my late reverend brother, and your excellent pastor, to be preached on, after his decease. They are very suitable to his sentiments, experience, and the circumstance of his case. He had long enjoyed a vigorous and useful life, which promised as many years of future service as most of his age could hope for ; but, by a very sudden and surprising stroke, it was threatened with being immediately taken away, making it evident that all the glory of man is as the flower of the grass, which fades away. God was pleased, after some time, to grant him a revival of his intellectual faculties, and an opportunity and ability to

reflect upon the frailty of natural life, and on the security of that unseen, supernatural, and eternal life, which believers have with Christ in God. The comfort and support which this gave him, together with the excellency and usefulness of the subject inclined him, as I suppose, to recommend it to you by the mouth of another, when he himself should be silent in the dust.

“Had it pleased God to have granted the many ardent requests for his recovery, which, in this place and elsewhere, were put up to Him, our prayers would have been turned into praises, and we might have now met together with a joy equal to our present sorrow. But seeing God has seen fit to put an end to his servant's patience, and our supplications for him, by taking him out of this world, it becomes us to submit to the all-wise and sovereign arbiter of life and death, who has now, after almost five

years' waiting at the door, admitted him into the joy of his Lord; and as he has desired, on the day of God's holy rest on earth, he began his everlasting rest in heaven.

"This worthy person, the Rev. Mr. John Nesbitt, was, as I am informed, born in Northumberland, October 6, A.D. 1661; his parents, designing him for the ministry, sent him to the university at Edinburgh, but he had not been there long before he was obliged to leave it, on the account of his zeal for the Protestant religion, which he had discovered in the most public manner, when the Duke of York, afterwards King James II., was present. This laid a foundation for his future troubles. As he and some others, forced by the iniquity of the times, to seek shelter in a strange land, were going from London for Holland, they were seized, and committed close prisoners to the Marshalsea.* There he was laid in

* There is no record of this amongst the State Papers.

irons, and confined for more than four months in hopes of making him an evidence; but though he was then under twenty years of age, God gave him grace and courage enough to withstand many advantageous offers, made him by the King in council.

“During his confinement he had no books in the prison with him, except his Bible, which he was forced to conceal, lest it should be taken from him. In this afflicting solitude he read the Scriptures much, and was very ready in them, and God was with him. His presence made the prison a palace to him, as he has since often declared. His enemies not being able to prove anything against him, he was set at liberty, and then he went to Holland to finish his studies; there he laid in a good stock of useful learning, God having blessed him with a very quick apprehension, a rich fancy, a strong memory, and a solid judgment. He was very well read in classic

authors, and thoroughly versed in history, and was not unacquainted with the ancient Christian writers, and the state of the Church in different ages. He had an exact knowledge of the Greek tongue, as I am informed, by one who is able to judge, and who was very intimate with him. Few of his contemporaries in the ministry equalled him in learning, and none could be less guilty of ostentation that way than he. He was respected on this account by all men of letters, though of different sentiments from his.

“He entered young upon the ministry, with great acceptance, which (though not very usual) was continued to the last, not only among his own people, but wherever he occasionally laboured. As a preacher he was qualified with excellent gifts; he had a natural vivacity, strong sense, lively affections, and a ready utterance, a very close and striking way of expression, and, which

I take to be far greater, he was favoured with a great presence of God with him in his work, which made it pleasant and delightful both to himself and his hearers, wherever he came. His acquaintance with the Scriptures was very great, and his explication and application of them in preaching very judicious and affecting; his citations from them would often be very surprising, and his allusions to passages in them very beautiful; the similitudes he used were very apt and ingenious, suited to fix the matter upon the mind. He was both an able and faithful minister, who knew how to divide the word aright, and to give to every one his proper portion. In trying the spiritual state of his hearers, he would be very close and searching. And they must be dreadfully stupid and hardened who could, under his preaching, go on in a course of sin. How would he denounce the threatenings of God against

hypocrites, with a Christ-like zeal and indignation! And yet he was very skilful in speaking a word in season to weary and wounded souls, leading them to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to stay themselves on Him, the great God of their salvation. His discourses were well composed and digested, and were the fruits of hard study. He did not amuse the people with useless curiosities, nor put them off with chaff instead of the solid grain ; he fed them with the sincere milk of the word, that they might grow thereby.

“He often preached on practical points, but in an evangelical way, teaching his hearers to derive their strength for duty, their motives to it, and delight in it, from a crucified and risen Jesus, which was his professed and most delightful subject. He was much displeased with what some call practical preaching, which, he used to say, he took to be a drooping of the Christian faith, and sinking

below some heathen moralists. One upon his death-bed charged his friend to let Mr. Nesbitt know that he blessed God for his ministry, which brought him to a clear and saving knowledge of Christ in his person and all his offices, 'which,' said he, 'I had never attained, though I had been a Church member many years, till I came to it under Mr. Nesbitt's ministry.'

"He had a well-digested knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel, and strictly adhered to them to the very last ; such as the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, the union of the Divine and human natures in the person of Christ, the absolute sovereignty of God's electing love, and the fulness of his efficacious grace ; the covenant of grace as made with Christ, and with all the elect in Him ; the justification of a sinner before God by the righteousness of Christ alone, with the rest of those doctrines commonly called Cal-

vinistic. He was well acquainted with the state of the controversies which had been raised as to these momentous points, and had a very happy way of exposing the absurdities which they who oppose the truth run into, under pretences of making things above reason more pleasing to what men of corrupt minds take the liberty to call reason. As he learned his faith from the Scriptures, and was for going no further in explaining mysteries than he gained light from thence, so he was not afraid or ashamed to own what he believed, or to stand up for it when attacked. In the close of the last century, the controversy relating to the doctrine of justification ran high : then he stood by the ancient faith, and appeared as bold as any one against innovations ; and at the same time joined with four others of his brethren, in declaring openly against antinomian errors. In the late unhappy disputes concerning the Trinity, he

cheerfully bore his testimony against any attempt to give up a doctrine of the last importance, and he thought it no absurdity to subscribe with his hand the doctrine which he believed in his heart and preached to the people.

“When he was about twenty-nine or thirty years of age, he accepted of a call to the pastoral office in this Church, which he discharged for more than thirty years together with great faithfulness, diligence, and success, in all which time, I am told, he never missed the administration of the Lord’s Supper at the usual seasons above once or twice, and was very seldom absent from his own pulpit on a Lord’s day. His labours were abundantly blessed for conversion and edification, of which there are yet many living witnesses. As a faithful shepherd, he watched over the flock with tenderness and compassionate regard to the meanest of them.

“In his judgments as to Church discipline, he was what is called congregational, and in the management of Church affairs he acted with great wisdom and prudence, and a great regard to the good of his people. He never lorded it over God’s heritage, but allowed the people their just rights ; yet he would not by insults be prevailed upon to give up his own, nor permit any to despise him, well knowing that the authority as well as the gentleness of a pastor is for the good of the Church. He was a great lover of peace, which, to the Church’s honour and his comfort, was enjoyed during his time in as great a degree as in any Church of their standing. When any difference arose he always endeavoured by proper methods to stifle them in the beginning, and as he had the welfare of his people much at heart, so there were few, if any, who were more revered and loved by their people than he was.

“ His temper was truly generous : he hated, as he used to say, a narrow, sordid spirit, and was far from being guilty of it himself. He provided for his family, not by laying up, but by laying out, casting his bread upon the waters, which God returned again, not in many days, but in few. I am informed by one who well knew, that he always gave away a tenth part of his income to charitable uses. He was very liberal to the poor, especially to poor ministers in the country, for whom he often pleaded with great earnestness and success in public; and on all occasions he was ready to show kindness to them, and to do all he could to encourage and support young men designed for or entering upon the ministry, who were found in the faith and like to be useful. His humanity and compassion, improved and heightened by grace, disposed him to give all the relief and comfort he was able,

to all the distressed that came under his care.

“His natural temper, which was quick and warm, was so much under the government of prudence and grace, that he could command it to admiration. And, as I am informed by more than one, if his anger was justly drawn out, he would be the first in showing a willingness to be at peace ; an example very worthy of imitation.

“His conversation was such as became the Gospel, and he adorned the doctrine of God his Saviour. He was a great redeemer of time, and, as one worthy of credit has told me, was never observed to spend an hour in a trifling manner. His visits were generally short, but very agreeable and useful. His advice, both as to things relating to this world and another, was very proper, judicious, and valuable. He filled up the relations of private life well ; he was a tender

and loving husband and parent, and administered advice and reproof to his children as there was occasion, not approving of anything in any of them that was dishonourable to the Gospel. His conduct as a master was such as commanded the love and respect of his servants.

“Though his sermons were received with general approbation, and he was much pressed to print many of them, yet, such was his modesty that he never could be prevailed upon to publish more than six, three occasioned by the deaths of ministers who were his particular friends, and three preached to young persons.

“Some time before he was taken ill, he used to say his work was done, and that very night he felt the distemper coming upon him, he prayed in the family very earnestly, that the Lord would not lay upon him more than He would enable him to bear. Which

request was wonderfully answered, for during the whole time of his illness, he showed great calmness and resignation to the will of God, never murmuring at his hand, but patiently waiting for his dismissal from this to a better world. When the time came, his departure was sudden, the king of terrors did not keep him long in hand. He has finished his course, and we have reason to think he is entered into the joy of his Lord."

There is a preface to the sermon, which is addressed to Mrs. Elizabeth Nesbitt, and in the course of it, several additional facts concerning her husband are mentioned. By the first shock of illness Nesbitt lost his reason; but "senses and reason" were not only restored, after a time, but he enjoyed freedom from pain; and a marvellous composure of mind. During the five years of his illness, the Church cheerfully raised a "handsome supply" for his needs; and a public

funeral was proposed, but declined by his widow, in accordance with her husband's instructions.

Nesbitt preached in Hare Court about thirty-seven years, and died in his seventy-fifth year. Like his predecessor, Nesbitt was borne by loving hands to Bunhill Fields, and was there interred in a vault. A Latin inscription was cut upon the gravestone; but no perfect copy now exists. The stone was broken into fragments when Dr. John Ripon made a copy of the inscriptions some time prior to 1790. In accordance with the singular practice of the authorities, a new vault was erected upon the top of Nesbitt's, and the name of the original occupant of the ground was not preserved. The exact position of the grave appears in Dr. Ripon's MS. at Heralds' College, and the spot* is easily traced. On the top vault is cut the name "Clifford."

* E. W. 55, N. S. 6.

CHAPTER XIII.

Sketch of Ministers from 1727 to 1859.

THE points of difference between Cokayn and Nesbitt are strongly marked. They were fitted for work of a very different character; and each found the greatest play for his talents in that he had to perform. Nesbitt would have failed to create a congregation in the way that Cokayn did; and Cokayn shrank from those controversies which Nesbitt successfully maintained. Nesbitt convinced by the force of argument, where Cokayn won by the tenderness of his words. Cokayn touched the heart, Nesbitt the intellect. Cokayn did not lack learning, and by it he enriched his mind with imagery, while Nesbitt

fortified his with reasons. Cokayn made the hearts of his hearers tender, and stored them with love. Nesbitt built round those hearts impregnable walls, and mounted arguments thereon. The age of Cokayn was one of patient suffering, that of Nesbitt earnest resistance. In the earlier period hearts were wanted; in the latter intellects. The work of each was necessary to the other, and by both the Church was built up and established. The congregation loved Cokayn as a father, they followed Nesbitt as a guide. By Cokayn every member of his Church was made loving and helpful to his neighbour; by Nesbitt the Church was turned into a school of reasoners. Cokayn would have given shelter and refreshment to a Papist flying from his persecutors, and sent him away with God's blessing; Nesbitt, if one had come in his way, would have plied the man with argument, and anathematized him at parting, if he had not

succeeded in proving to his acceptance that the Pope was Antichrist.

George Cokayn never would have "excommunicated" or "cast out" a member of the Church; he would have dealt with wandering and erring brothers by quite as effectual but more loving measures; but John Nesbitt exercised the penal functions of his office without remorse. His had been the education of the head; and his brain was the first portion of his body to fail. The activity of his mind wore out his mental powers long before his body decayed. By the manner in which the members of his Church surrounded him with the offices of love, long after he ceased to minister to the congregation, is proved how deeply he had won their respect. He was exact in his conversation, and dogmatic, even in the matter of "laced coffee." In his religious opinions he never changed; and he infused the same solidity into the members

of his Church. His assistants in the ministerial work must have been subjected to severe cross-examinations before they were admitted to his pulpit.

His wife survived him, but how long it is hardly possible to discover now. From the death of her husband the history of Harecourt is contained in such outlines of the lives of the succeeding ministers as have been handed down to us. We know very little of the life of the Church, the work of the deacons, the zeal of Church members, the accession of converts, after the time of Nesbitt until quite a recent period. We are, however, warranted in believing that God's work was zealously carried on by recalling the previous and present history of the Church.

Of the ministers who followed Nesbitt the succeeding sketches, written by Dr. Raleigh in 1860, supply particulars.

For some years Mr. Nesbitt was *assisted* by

the Rev. Matthew Clark, of Miles Lane, as also by the Rev. James Naylor, who died of consumption at the early age of twenty-nine; and by the Rev. John Conder, who continued his services in the same capacity under succeeding pastors until his death in 1744.

The Rev. John Hurriou succeeded Mr. Nesbitt in the pastoral office. Of him it is written that "as a Divine he was as judicious and accomplished as any that appeared in his age." He was particularly well read in the Socinian controversy, and discovered a singular ability in the exposition and defence of the doctrine of the Trinity. He came to London too late in life to achieve any high success as a minister. He was ripe in scholarship, of high character, and of good report in all the Churches, but having been nearly thirty years in the ministry, his "natural force" must have suffered some "abatement," and after a comparatively short

period of service in the ministry of Harecourt, often interrupted by illness, he ended his days in peace. He desired that it should be communicated to the world that "he died in the firm persuasion and belief of those great doctrines which he had preached and maintained without the least hesitation, and that he found more comfort from them in his last sickness than ever he had done before." Dr. Ridgley preached his funeral sermon from the text, "He was a burning and a shining light" (John v. 35).

He was succeeded by the Rev. Samuel Bruce, a young man of unusual grace and promise. The short account we have of him seems to light up his image to us with a wonderful beauty. He was learned, serious, fervent, and much consecrated to his work. He had received his academical training partly in Sheffield and partly in London under the care of Dr. Ridgley. He began to preach while

very young, and seems to have had large acceptance from the first. After some years of experience in the ministry, as assistant to the Rev. Daniel Mayo, of Kingston, Surrey, he accepted the invitation which was presented to him to succeed Mr. Hurrion at Harecourt. Only for five short years was he permitted to labour there; and then, amid the deep and affectionate sorrows of his people, and surrounded by much fruit of his ministry, at the early age of twenty-seven, "this able and useful minister left this transitory life for a world of immortal glory." He died on the 5th of December, 1737.

The Rev. William King, D.D., was the next in succession in the ministry of Harecourt. His parents were eminent for their piety, and trained their son with a view to the sacred office, if God by his grace should call. Their wish happily became his purpose, and after a previous course of studies, he was sent to the

University of Utrecht in Holland, where his theological education was completed, and where he first began to preach. On returning to England, he was settled at Chisham, Bucks, where, by ministerial labours, and in other ways, he seems to have been very useful. While there, he had repeated offers of preferment in the Established Church; but he could not conscientiously fall in with the terms of conformity. It was in the year 1740 that Mr. King removed to London, and became successor to Mr. Bruce, and he continued in office and in various usefulness for nearly thirty years. He was one of the preachers of the Merchants' Lecture at Pinner's Hall for many years. He suffered much during the last years of his life, but preached to his people on the Lord's day immediately preceding his death. The text of that day was remarkable as consisting of but one word, "NOW," taken from the last verse of the

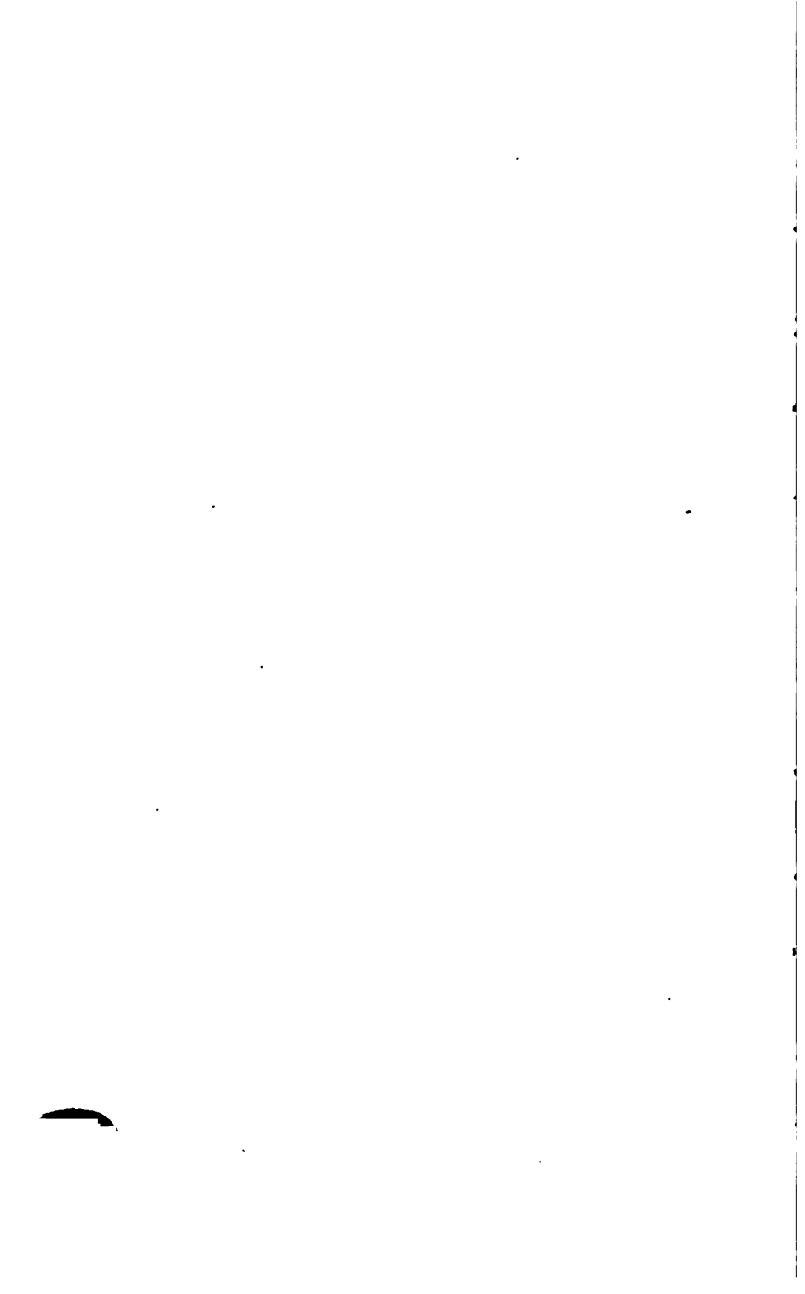
Epistle of Jude. He had preached several discourses from that verse, and he meant to preach another from the word "EVER," but before the Sabbath came he was called into that eternity of which he intended to speak. Dr. King is buried in Bunhill Fields.

The Church after a vacancy of about a year chose as minister the Rev. Joseph Popplewell, who had been born and educated in Yorkshire, and was settled in the ministry at Nottingham. He continued in London only two years and a half; some differences then arising between the people and him, he returned into Yorkshire, and died at Beverley.

The Rev. Joshua Webb began his ministry in 1775, and ended it in the year 1820. The Rev. John Davies succeeded Mr. Webb, and continued until 1826. The Rev. William Sterne Palmer was the last minister of Harecourt during its continuance in Aldersgate Street; he began his work there in 1827, and

died in 1852. Of these last three respected ministers there are no written memorials, but there are those alive who can remember them all, and who would willingly testify that they were "workmen needing not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"—worthy successors of those great and good men who had gone before them.

From 1852 to 1859, various supplies were provided. On the first Sabbath of the latter year, the present ministry, under Dr. Raleigh, began.



APPENDIX.

OUTLINE OF THE SERMON PREACHED BY GEORGE COKAYN,

AT ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER,

NOVEMBER 29, 1648,

BEFORE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

“I have said, Ye are gods : and all of you are children of the Most High : but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes. Arise, O God, judge the earth : for thou shalt inherit all nations.”—PSALM lxxxii. 6—8.

INTRODUCTION.

CONSIDER two deadly enemies :—I. The flesh ;
and, II. The spirit.

I. The flesh.

a. In its exaltation.

b. In its humiliation.

II. The Spirit.

- a.* In His preparation.
- b.* In His work.
- c.* In His authority.

EXPOSITION OF TEXT.

III. Why are magistrates and rulers called gods?

- a.* For their simplicity and entireness.
- b.* For light and knowledge.
- c.* For righteousness and justice.
- d.* In relation to mercy.
- e.* In full rest and satisfaction.

IV. What are the symptoms of death in a dying ruler?

- a.* All his senses are lost ; he neither sees, hears, smells, tastes, nor handles.

V. God prepares Himself to judge.

- 1. God ariseth ; that is, He ariseth from sleep.
 - a.* He ariseth from a state of retirement.
 - b.* He ariseth from a state of forgetfulness.
 - c.* When a man is asleep he is unwilling to receive petitioners.
- 2. God ariseth from a state of humiliation.
 - a.* When great men die, God ariseth.

- b.* Notwithstanding God's exaltation, his people are not farther off from His goodness and love.

VI. God doth not arise to be idle ; but He ariseth to judge.

- a.* He will plead all causes Himself.
- b.* He will also determine all causes.
- c.* When God hath determined all causes, He will also maintain what He hath done.
- d.* God will avenge all.

VII. God judges the earth in two ways: immediately, or mediately.

GENERAL APPLICATION.

- I. Will the Lord judge ?
- II. Shall God judge ?
- III. Doth God judge ?
- IV. Christ, by hereditary right, shall possess all nations, in all they have and are.
 - a.* He shall inherit the obedience of all nations.
 - b.* He shall inherit all their wealth.
 - c.* He shall inherit the praises of all nations.
 - d.* He shall inherit all our joy.

PARTICULAR APPLICATION.

- I. Let the people of a nation in the greatest confusions wait upon God.
- II. Let all magistrates and rulers
 - a.* Begin and judge themselves.
 - b.* Let them not delay to act for the people's good.
 - c.* Let them act with much tenderness and sweetness towards all those whom God hath honoured in their preservation and protection.
 - d.* Be willing to hear God when He speaks in His providences.
 - e.* Be constant in communion with God.
 - f.* Take heed not to oppose the Spirit of God,, and the spiritual worship of God.

DIVINE ASTROLOGY;

OR,

A SCRIPTURE PROGNOSTICATION OF THE SAD
EVENTS WHICH ORDINARILY ARISE FROM
THE GOOD MAN'S FALL BY DEATH.

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON PREACHED IN
STEPHEN'S, WALBROOK, JANUARY 19, 1657, AT THE
FUNERAL OF THE HONOURABLE COLONEL WILLIAM
UNDERWOOD, ONE OF THE ALDERMEN OF THE CITY
OF LONDON.

By GEORGE COKAYN,

AN UNWORTHY TEACHER OF THE GOSPEL AT PANCRAS, SOPER LANE,
LONDON.

London: Printed by Robert White for Thomas Brewster, at
the sign of "The Three Bibles," at the west end of Pauls,
Anno Dom. 1658.

EXTRACTS FROM PREFACE AND SERMON.

TO A WIDOW.

"O look up with a believing heart to Him who is
touched with the feelings of our infirmities; by whom,
as afflictions abound, so consolations abound also.
Let nothing but faith take off your mourning weeds:
if you come forth out of God's furnace in the exer-
cise of that gospel grace, you will be as pure gold

purged from your dross. You should diligently observe the Church's posture when she came forth out of the wilderness of tribulations. She came, says the text, 'leaning upon her beloved.' This phrase, 'leaning upon her beloved,' notes not only confidence and recumbency, but familiarity also ; as the wife throws herself into the arms of her husband. Thus do you come forth out of your wilderness, leaning upon your spiritual husband with the recumbency and familiarity of a true faith. But take heed you do not lean upon Christ as the apricot-tree doth upon the wall, when all the while its root is in the earth. Surely the Lord calls you by this rod to be a greater stranger and pilgrim in the world than ever ; and that you should be rooted more in Christ, and live in Him in whom dwelleth earth's and heaven's fulness."

GOD'S CARE OF THE WIDOW.

"God doth in an especial manner protect the widow. He will in this respect be a husband to her, and see that none shall afflict her. Observe what strict charge He gives about her ; 'Ye shall not,' says he, 'afflict (any) widow or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword.' You see with how much care and tenderness the Lord doth

shelter every widow under the shadow of his wings. He daily provides for her. She may go with an especial freedom to God's treasury, and receive whatsoever is requisite for her. The Lord still gives her a share in all the distributions He makes to others. The Lord will have her to reap something of what He hath given to others, and to enter into part of their harvest. He will establish to her all that He gives her. The estate she hath in the world, be it little or much, is better settled than any others. 'He establisheth,' says the text, 'the border of the widow;' the utmost border and skirt of her estate which lies furtherest off, and may possibly be most desperate, the Lord will establish as well as that which is nearest to her, and seems to be most fair. What she hath, God will take care it shall not decrease. It was the widow's oil in the cruse, and the widow's meal in the barrel, that did not waste. In case any molest her about her title to what she enjoys, God will be judge, and speak, yea, determine all on her side : therefore it is said, 'He is the widow's judge, and He executes the judgment of the widow.' Her name in Hebrew comes from a word which signifies to be dumb or silent ; she cannot, now her head is cut off, speak for herself ; therefore God undertakes to plead effectually for her. God looks upon the least expression of tenderness in any towards her as a signal act of goodness and religion towards

Himself. To give but a visit to the fatherless and widows is accounted by the Apostle pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father. Observe here how visitings of the fatherless and widow hath obtained not only the name, but the very definition of religion."

ON WORLDLY HONOURS.

" ' Brethren,' saith the Apostle, ' the time is short, it remaineth that both they that have wives, be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away.' Observe here how the Apostle endeavours to take off the saints from a too eager pursuit of this world upon this argument, because the time is short. The word in the Greek is metaphorical, and taken from the custom of mariners, who fold up their sails when they come near the port ; even so our time is as it were folded up, therefore our hearts should be loosened from the vanities of this world when we are making into our port of happiness and glory. And it is no less ridiculous for us to make a bustle about the honours and preferments of this world. The greatest worldly honour is but a bubble, and thou thyself art

another. The noble and the ignoble dust are both alike in the grave; the poorest cottager is, in that state, upon the same level with the greatest courtier. You that are ambitious for honours here, remember the grave is an open sepulchre, which will swallow you and them too in a moment. Severus the emperor, looking upon his urn, made this expression: 'Thou shalt contain him whom the whole world could not contain.' It is a vain thing, therefore, to let your hearts run out to worldly preferments, seeing a moment's enjoyment thereof cannot be secured to you. The gallows brought up the rear of all Haman's court advancements."

ON TRUST IN GREAT MEN.

"It is vain to trust in great men, for they must die. If they live, they may prove a broken reed to thee, but be sure they will die, and then what thou didst build upon them falls with them. You, then, that sell your consciences to great men for their favour, upon which you lean very hard, what will you do when that reed is broken? When an old house falls, how many rats must shift for themselves? Therefore remember David's counsel: 'Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his dust; in that very day his thoughts perish. Happy is he who hath

the God of Jacob for his help ; whose hope is in the Lord his God.' You may expect much possibly from your interest in men of high degree in the world ; but know this, that they have no more security for an hour's life than he that sits upon the dunghill."

UPON TRUST IN GOOD MEN.

"It is as vain to trust in good men, for the righteous die, and the merciful man is taken away. Godly men are the jewels and earrings of a nation, but take heed you make not an idol of them, as Israel once did. Though there should be no abatement in their goodness to the very last (which, from the examples of former and present times especially, we can hardly hope for), yet there is no depending upon them, because we are sure they must go down to the dust of death. Yea, our trusting in them is a means to carry them away sooner. God will have no rival ; we wither the sweetest flowers by smelling too much to them. If we idolise our gourd, God can soon prepare a worm to smite it that it die."

MEDITATION UPON DEATH.

"Often meditate upon death as a thing which will certainly overtake you. God hath solemnly proclaimed that 'all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field.' The grass withereth, and

the flower fadeth. The flower of the field withers sooner than that which is enclosed in the garden. Such a flower (saith the prophet here) is 'all flesh and the goodliness thereof.' A Nestor's and a Methuselah's age must have an end. Though thy age be like a summer's day, yet it must have a night. Therefore it would be much wisdom in us to consider our latter end. We should think every day to be our last day. It is reported of one who was invited to go to a feast the next day, that he gave this answer: 'For many years together I have not had a to-morrow.' Therefore let us diligently observe Solomon's counsel, 'Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.' The young as well as the old should mind this, for many times the young ones make greater haste to the grave than the old ones. The Hebrews have a proverb that the old camels do often carry the young camels' skins to the market. Therefore let us all make death the constant subject of our meditation. The putting death far from us brings sin too near us; the hearkening to the devil's doctrine when he preached, 'Ye shall not surely die,' was the sad inlet to all manner of transgression."

AN INSPIRATION TO WORK.

"Death should put us upon it to work hard while we live, for we know not how soon death may come.

The continual thoughts of death will put life into your actions. When Paul was at Troas he preached till midnight, because he was to depart on the morrow. What a long sermon did Christ preach in the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th chapters of John, in one evening, because He was to suffer the next day ! Observe what He Himself testifies in this case : ‘ I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day : ’ says He, ‘ the night cometh, when no man can work. ’ This is that which puts the devil himself upon vigorous action, because he knoweth he hath but a short time.”

ON THE DEATH OF GOOD MEN.

“ The taking away of righteous and good men is a sad and angry dispensation of God towards a people. Oh, this is one of the sharpest arrows He hath in his quiver. I tell you, the taking away of one holy man is a thousand times more significant than the making of heaps upon heaps of the slain Philistines. We will show you, in a few particulars, wherein this is so sad and angry a dispensation. Saints do possess all things. God hath made this whole world for Christ and his Church, and it is for their sakes that the creation affords anything that is either useful or comfortable to the several species that are in it. ‘ All things, ’ says the Apostle, ‘ are yours. ’ There would be no gospel, no Spirit, either in Paul or a Cephas, to

reveal this gospel, were it not for the Church, and so for all other mercies, either spiritual or temporal. Were but the whole number of God's elect once gathered out of the world, and translated into the kingdom which is above, we should soon see an end of all the glory and perfection of this world."

DEATH OF THE GOOD: A PROGNOSTICATION.

"God doth usually take away his saints and people from some evil that is to come. He brings home his stock of corn into the barn before the storm comes. Do you see God make haste to gather his people apace into rest? be assured that the destroying angel is upon the wing, ready to execute his commission upon the world. God takes his people away from the evil of sin which is to come. The Lord will not suffer his children to live to see that which would break their hearts, and be worse to them than ten thousand deaths. God would not let the old honest generation that had seen and been actors in the wonderful things which He wrought for them by Joshua, live to see that grand apostacy which we find upon record in Judges ii. 10, 11. God would not suffer his people who were engaged with Joshua in his good old cause, to live to see a new upstart generation turn aside from following the Lord and build again the things which (they) had destroyed. I wish that something of this

kind be not preached this day to England, in the taking away of so many of our old experienced champions for our spiritual and civil liberties. Sure we are, they are taken away from some evil of sin. David shall not live to see the apostacy of his son Solomon. Neither shall Hezekiah live to see the unparalleled wickedness of his son Manasseh. Jehoiada died before that grand apostacy in Joash his time. Paul did not live to see the Church at Ephesus leave her first love, whereof he prophesied a little before his death, and which John saw made good and testified against it. God takes them away from the evil of punishment. When God intends to disturb the world, He calls his people beforehand to rest in their beds. Methuselah dies that year in which the flood came. Elisha dies a little before the Moabites invaded the land. Hezekiah must have peace in his days, and be removed from the sad judgments which were afterwards inflicted upon Judah. See also what favour the Lord showed to good Josiah in this case. 'Behold,' saith the Lord, 'I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace, and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place.' Thus graciously did God deal also with Jehoiada, who was taken away by death immediately before the wrath of the Lord brake forth against Judah for the sins of Joash and the people."

EXAMPLES OF LATTER TIMES.

“Augustine died immediately before Hyppo, the city where he lived, was taken by the Vandals ; and so Pareus, before the taking of Hydelburg. In like manner Luther, who prophesied of the wars in Germany, prayed often to the Lord that he might not live to see them, wherein God heard him, and he was by death taken away from that sore evil to come. Our own times have afforded us many instances of like nature, had we but laid them to heart. A little before these wars it was observed that many eminent men were taken away by death, upon which, some considering, serious, good men did prognosticate some great and sore troubles to be even at the door, which we have seen made good ; and the Lord grant that a worse event may not receive life from the death of so many righteous and merciful men as these two last years have sent to the house of the grave.”

WOE TO ENGLAND.

“Woe, woe to that nation or city, from the midst of whom the Lord takes away his own precious servants. I must upon this account proclaim the vengeance of the Lord against England and London, though there were no other concurrent signs, yet this

one, viz., the Lord's removing so fast his people by death, betokens the succession of a black and gloomy day. Oh surely the plucking up the stakes doth plainly foretell the hedge will not stand long. How did God threaten Israel when He took away Jeroboam's towardly son, who was the only one in that house in whom was found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel! 'The Lord,' saith the prophet Ahijah, 'shall smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water, and He shall root up Israel out of this good land which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger.' Observe the connection of these two prophecies, when he had assured the wife of Jeroboam that her good son should die; then he shows what should also be the event of it, viz., the desolation and captivity of all Israel. It is as sad, yet as true a connection also, which you have in Mal. iii. 17, compared with chapter iv. 1. In the 17th verse of the third chapter, the Lord speaks of making up his jewels, and in chapter iv. 1, you have this doleful threatening prophecy, 'Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, it shall leave them neither root nor branch.' This connection will be as true in

the execution as it is here in the threatening. If this, then, be so, let us all seriously lay it to heart, and be not of this senseless, stupid number spoken of in the text, who did not at all consider so weighty and important a providence as this is. When saints are taken away, a nation or city's wealth and strength, and whatsoever else is conducive to their preservation, are removed with them; for the truth is, these only are your true and real friends upon whom you may depend, and while you enjoy them you may expect good, but their removal preaches evil and destruction. When one desired to see Alexander's treasure, he commanded his servants to show them his many faithful friends that were about him, esteeming them all the wealth and riches he had. Such a mercy are the little remnant of God's faithful ones to England: all else are but briers and thorns. Therefore, if the Lord begins to destroy the foundations and to pull down the pillars, let us take it seriously into consideration, and go to God in faith and prayer that what we have just cause to fear may be the issue, the Lord may graciously prevent. The Church, under the influence of such a dispensation as this, resolves saying, 'I will look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation.' And David, upon the same consideration, cries out, 'Help, Lord.' O that God would lay our hearts low before Him in this day of

great rebuke, that we may own our guilt and mourn over our several abominations, and through the grace of God not see those sad consequences which the dying of so many good men doth portend."

AN ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF THAT EMINENT MINISTER OF THE
GOSPEL,

MR. GEORGE COKAYN,

WHO EXCHANGED THIS MORTAL FOR AN IMMORTAL LIFE,

NOVEMBER 21ST, 1691.

WHAT, still more breaches ! Is Cokayn dead ?
Who was so desirous the Gospel should be
spread :

Who made it his constant study to promote,
That he might gain souls that were remote,
And to build up those that were already call'd,
That he might finish his ministerial work to all ;
Whose heart was still engaged in pastoral care,
That he still the flock of Christ might feed here,
In which the Lord had made him overseer :

Studying with great pain upon his bed with care,
That he might still be brought on Sabbath in his
chair.

Praying to God that he might still hold out,
Till he had by his providence found out
One that Jehovah hath promised to send in need,
His people with knowledge and understanding feed.
The Lord was pleased to grant him his desire,
That all his Church in one mind was entire
In fixing their eye whom Providence found out in all,
They fixed on Nesbitt, and give him a gospel-call,
Which hath proved himself a gospel-preacher to all—
A workman that needs not be ashamed to none,
Preaching forth free grace in Christ to all that come,
Following him who was his patron, but now is high
Above the reach of all his enemy.
Whereby his soul doth reap the fruit of all,
While we are still labouring in sin's thrall,
In bondage where Satan would destroy us all,
The very elect if possibly he might,
But Christ has pray'd that He might give them sight,
Whereby He hath rescued them out of Satan's gin,

Wherein they were caught by Adam's sin ;
But by free grace they were relieved,
And by the imputed righteousness of Christ relieved.
And by the like precious faith was found,
Which was by our dear pastor found,
That, through the knowledge of God and of Jesus
Christ,
Grace and peace should be multiplied to the highest,
To all those that were looking high,
For the light of his countenance to keep them by ;
And that it is a contrary strain in those
Who are crying for any worldly good to oppose,
Cokayn, he would divide the word aright ;
Preaching the gospel with all his might,
And that Christ would come as a thief in night
To those that are found his enemies in despite ;
They would be found naked, and their shame
appear,
When conscience will be awaken'd with greater fear ;
Still he was harping on that strain
That sinners might be brought to God by Christ
again.

He was always mindful of the church's poor,
And not unmindful to others in distresses more :
Constantly he was mindful of church-order there,
According to what the Scriptures made appear ;
And not to keep that in his own power alone,
Which does belong to more than one,
Which does rely in the whole Church, that those
Which are enemies to gospel-order might be oppos'd,
And that all might agree, as members not dead,
Of that mystical body, whom Christ is the only Head.
It is to be lamented in elegy this day,
That there be so many of those that haste away.
The Lord grant those that stay behind
Do mind their duty, as in the Word they find
Power in heaven and earth was given to Christ
alone,
That all the Father had given to Him might be brought
home—
We are but strangers and pilgrims here,
Where no continuing city does appear ;
But we must seek for one that is to come ;
And that it might be our constant care

To walk amongst the tombs while we are here,
That death might not be a surprise to none ;
That we might be hastening to our home,
Endeavouring to mortify the deeds of the body while
here ;

That sin, which is the sting of death, might not
appear ;

That by free grace in Christ alone, I tell :

By faith, you may walk through the valley

Of the shadow of death and fear no ill.

When this mortal shall put on immortality,

We shall be blest to all eternity,

And enjoy the region which is above,

Where blessed souls are still in love,

Where there is no strife nor envy found at all,

But all with one accord ever agree shall,

Singing the praises of God with hallelujah ;

But you to stay behind in this lower region still :

Be not dejected, it is our Heavenly Father's will ;

Who knows best what his churches need,

Who hath and will send pastors them to feed—

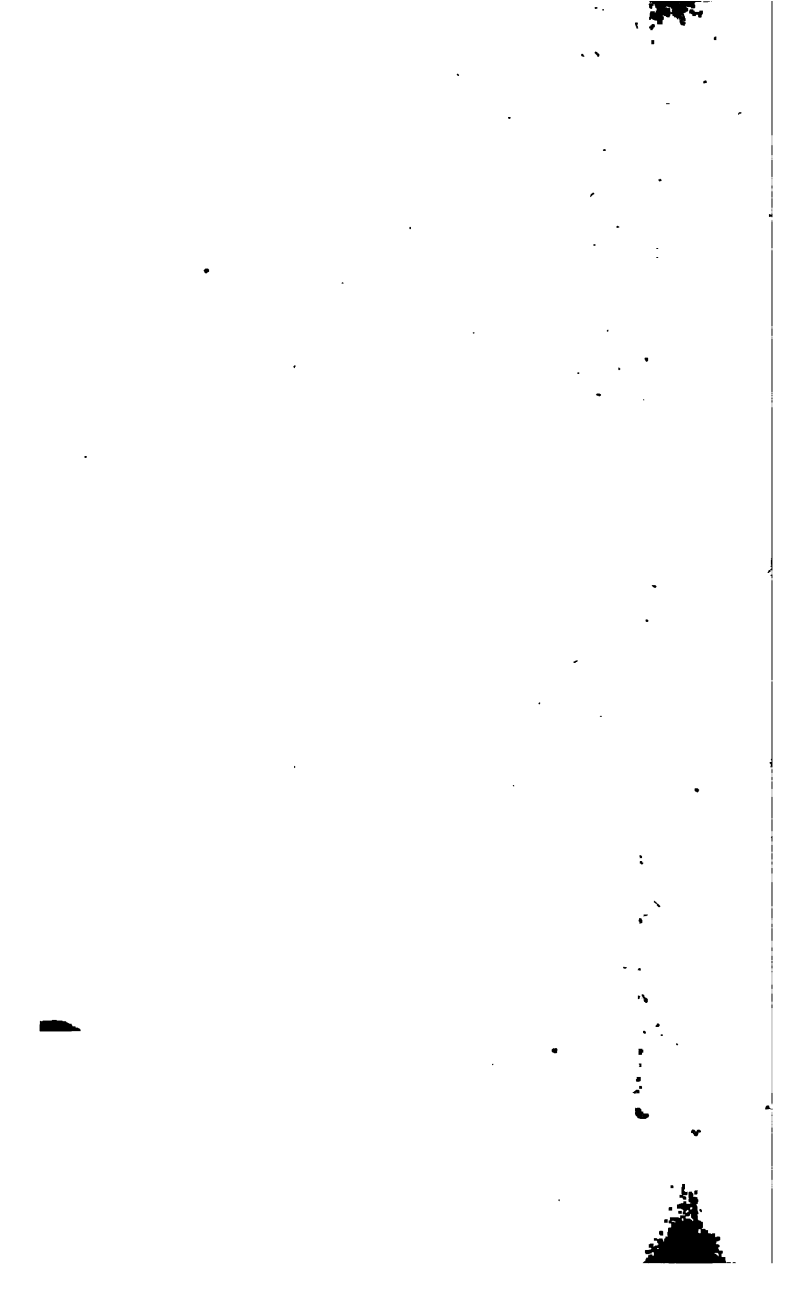
According to his promise abideth faithful still,

Tho' our poor staggering faith is apt to reel.
He is the same yesterday, to-day, for ever,
To frustrate all those that do endeavour
To oppose his church which shall abide with Him for
ever.

This eminent minister will be interred on Friday,
the 27th of this instant November, 1691, from Stock-
ing-Weavers' Hall, in Redcross Street.

London: Printed and are to be sold by Richard
Baldwin, near the Oxford Arms Inn, Warwick
Lane, 1691.

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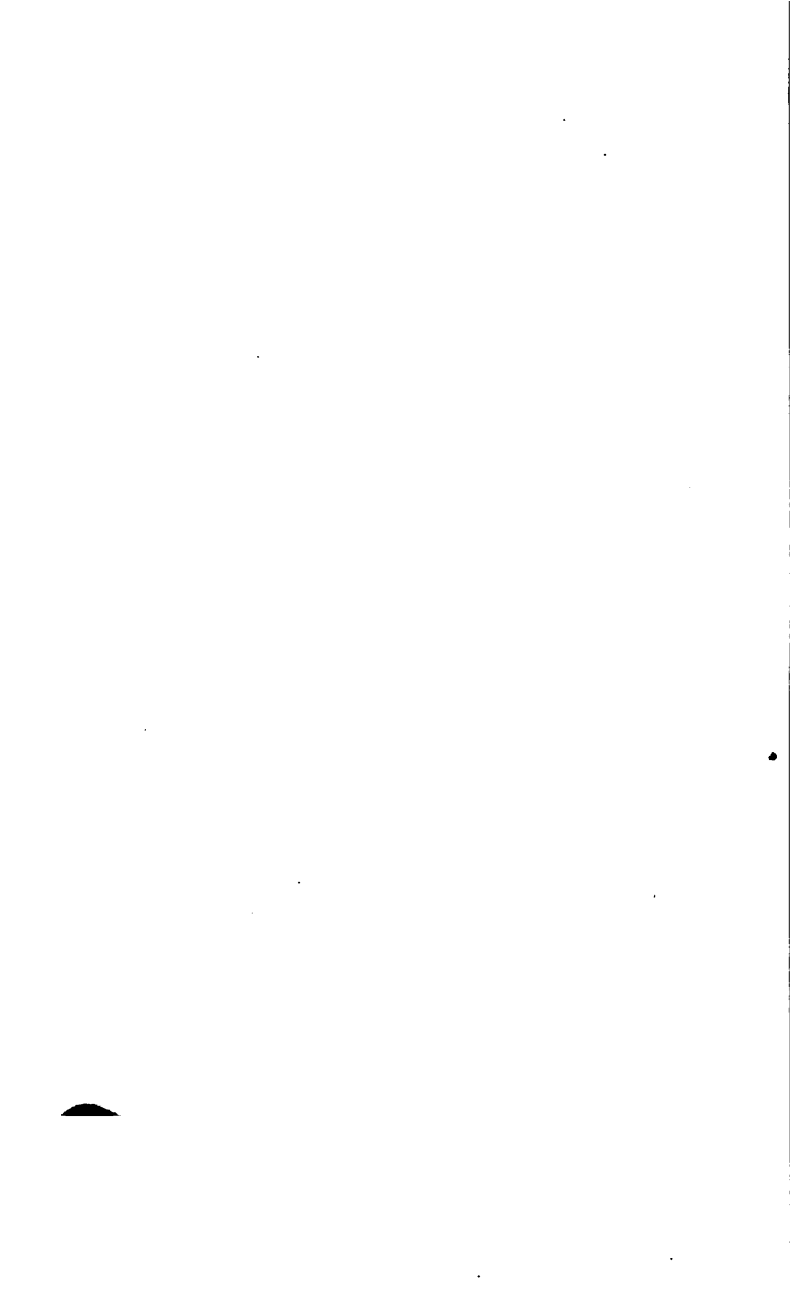
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